

GENERAL CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ  
ON WAR.





# GENERAL CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ ON WAR.

TRANSLATED BY  
MISS MAGUIRE.

WITH NOTES

BY

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INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW,  
MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE RISING SUN OF JAPAN.

*WITH TWO MAPS.*

OLD COLLECTION

Not to be taken out

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To

GENERAL SIR HORACE SMITH-DORRIEN,

K.C.B., D.S.O., *p.s.c.*,

COMMANDING-IN-CHIEF AT ALDERSHOT.

DEAR SIR HORACE,

It is now more than twenty years since I had the pleasure of working through with you the Campaigns which the late General Sir E. Hamley selected as examples of the truth and the force of the principles of Strategy. Your presence as a student in our classes was encouraging, your progress was rapid, and your subsequent success has been complete.

I venture to dedicate to you a small collection of the precepts of a very brilliant and original German military thinker. His race hearkened to his counsels and recognised that "Knowledge is Power." Hence their progress in the period of time since we worked together has been marvellous in every walk of life:—in Commerce, Arts, Science, Education, Sea Power, and Social Improvement as well as in Military organisation and reputation.

But it is not altogether because you are in command of a great British Military Centre or because of your services in the field or because of your admirable system of Military Training and of your efforts to promote the progress of your subordinates in tactical skill that you deserve our highest esteem. We respect you especially because you have shaken off the trammels of a stupefying and degrading system of discipline, falsely so called. You despise the miserable anachronism which would treat the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of our Army as either knaves or fools or mere machines. You think that men who can be trusted with our Imperial Greatness in the stress of battle can be trusted to look after themselves in everyday life. You "like not that

perpetual childhood of prescription, unexercised and unbreathed," which martinets mistake for military efficiency. Your greatest service has been to teach our soldiers to respect themselves as MEN.

You desire to treat them like wise citizens as well as brave warriors. You would elevate their minds as well as strengthen their bodies. You have induced them to remember, in their leisure hours as well as during manœuvres, that in their "forms divine the image of their glorious Maker shone."

This your reverence for the individual dignity of the men under your command, joined to your services, so long and so meritorious in so many campaigns, from the Tirah to Egypt, and from the Soudan to the Transvaal, justifies me in applying to you Chaucer's immortal tribute to his Knight, a Crusader as well as a doughty champion of the Plantagenets:—

" Full worthy was he in his lordes werre  
And therto hadde he ridden no man ferre,  
As wel in Cristendom as in Hethenesse,  
And ever honoured for his worthinesse . . .  
He never yet no vilanie ne sayde,  
In alle his lif, unto no manner wight.  
He was a veray parfit gentil knight."

Yours faithfully,

T. MILLER MAGUIRE.

10, EARL'S COURT SQUARE, S.W.

*February 22nd, 1909.*

## PREFACE.

A GLANCE through any chapter of this book will enable our readers to comprehend its value and its objects. Its form was necessarily such as to suit the *United Service Magazine*, of which the chapters were originally articles.

An attempt has been made to convey in a convenient fashion to our readers the substance rather than the words of the vast volumes of one of the most distinguished writers on the Art of War, without any slavish acceptance of all his principles or details.

The influence of Clausewitz on the minds of Generals and Staff Officers is even now so potent that a very able critic of the Manchurian War of 1904-5 ascribed the victories of the Japanese to this illustrious German.\*

We are, however, not ashamed of being natives of the British Isles, even if only Celts. Accordingly we have made as much use by way of comment and illustration of British methods and British military history as our opportunities and space allowed.

And truly the very words "British soldier" have an inspiring sound, recalling "the fierce native valour that inspired the stirring memory of a thousand years." If our race could only be preserved from the wretched decadence of urban life so falsely called civilisation, and from the miserable mismanagement and chicanery of mere vote catchers and plutocrats and bureaucrats—if it could only be elevated above itself by the united efforts of a generation of patriots in every rank, it would soon reach an altitude of greatness above not only all Greek and Roman, but also above all German fame.

\* See *Times*, 23rd March, 1905, and the 'The War in the Far East,' Chapter XLV.

But as steps towards the realisation of this ideal we venture to suggest a careful study of German military science as expounded by Clausewitz and his long line of able and successful disciples, and a still more careful study of German economic and commercial methods in all their rapid and brilliant activity by the banks of the Rhine and in Westphalia.

We trust that the members of our Regular Army who have co-operated with our Navy in building up an Empire which is the sublimest "birth of Time," will find the precepts and examples of this little book of some value.

We venture also to hope that the members of our Territorial Force may be induced and helped by its pages to press forward in numbers and in skill and in zeal to that absolutely necessary, and from every social as well as military point of view, most beneficial, consummation:—the creation and expansion of a truly National Army of the most efficient type—broad-based on the best brains and bodies of all our folk of every race and in every land.

Clausewitz frequently refers to the Campaigns of Napoleon and the Notes as frequently refer to the Campaigns in Virginia; we have, therefore, provided maps to illustrate both these remarkable series of military operations.

A. M. E. MAGUIRE.

T. M. MAGUIRE.

10, EARL'S COURT SQUARE, S.W.

*February 22nd, 1909.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

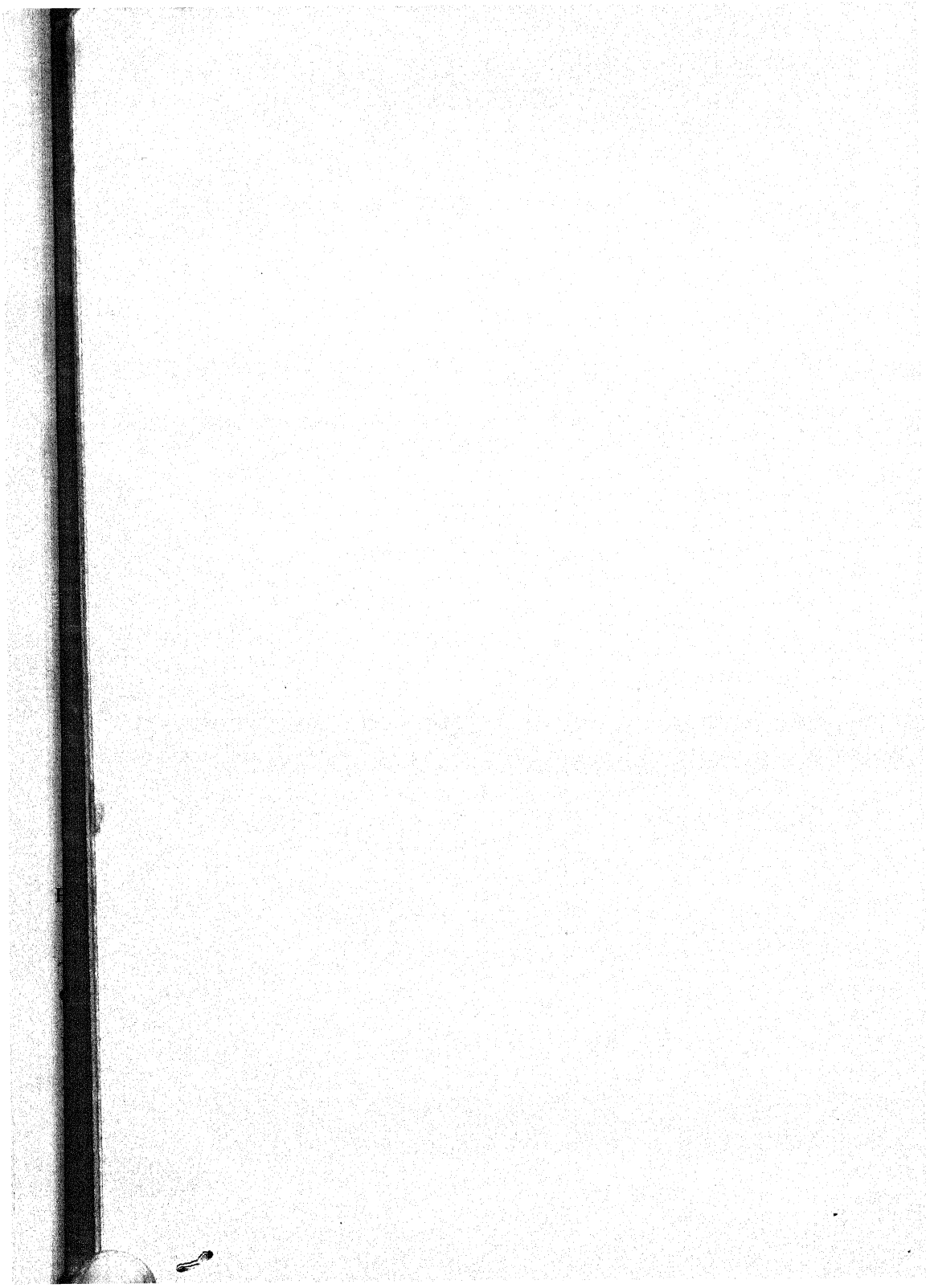
It would be a more daring task for a woman to venture on translating such a very serious and difficult treatise on war as that by the illustrious General C. von Clausewitz, only that it was published by a woman, his wife, at his urgent request.

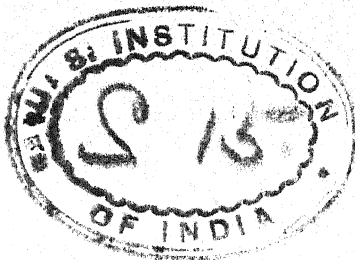
I certainly do not pretend to be a strategist or tactician, but I think few women have dealt with more military literature, as I must have typed at least half a million words relating to war in the past few years.

Still, I must confess that I found Clausewitz a very troublesome undertaking, and I must ask the indulgence of my readers for entering on such a dangerous enterprise ; but several well-known military experts had refused the task, and it was generally believed that a translation was required. I have used the new German edition, *Berlin Ferd Dümmler*, 1905. I may say that my father, T. M. Maguire, has helped me in various ways, principally by supplementing the original paragraphs with some remarks of his own, with which, as he says, Clausewitz would have agreed, had not that man of genius died in 1831.

A. M. E. MAGUIRE.

10, EARL'S COURT SQUARE, S.W.  
*January 31st, 1907.*





# GENERAL CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ ON WAR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST IDEA OF "THE ART OF WAR" WAS THE PREPARATION OF FORCES.

Formerly, the term "art of war," or "science of war," was understood to mean the sum of that knowledge and skill which has to do with material things only.

The fashioning, preparation, and use of weapons, the construction of fortresses and field works, the organism of an army and the mechanism of its movements, were the objects of this art, and its ultimate aim was the creation of a fighting force fit for war.

In this the Japanese excelled from 1893 to 1905.

One had to deal only with material elements and with a one-sided activity, and it was in reality nothing but the gradual elevation of military action from mere handiwork to a refined mechanical art. All this bears as much relation to war itself as the art of sword-making does to the art of fighting with the sword.

It was not yet a question of the employment of the intellectual energies in a prescribed direction and against constant counter-action in the moment of danger.

### THE ART OF BESIEGING, AND WHAT IT REVEALED.

The art of besieging revealed, for the first time, something of the conduct of the combat itself, in so far as the action of the mind

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upon the material is concerned, but generally only in so far as it speedily incorporated itself in such new material forms as approaches, trenches, counter-approaches, batteries, and so on; and each advance in the art was characterised by some such material improvement.

Of this art Demetrius Poliercites was a master, and pictures of his enormous instruments for the Siege of Rhodes, 305 B.C., are to be found in old historians.

All that was necessary was the arrangement of these materials in due order for practical purposes.

In this kind of warfare the intellectual effects of warriors resembled rather the feats of engineers regarding water supply and railway embankments than the strategical conceptions of Alexander, or Zenghis, or Napoleon, or Grant, which ranged over the actions of multitudes of men hundreds of miles away from their own posts.

### TACTICS: ATTEMPT TO WELD THE FORCES TOGETHER.

Later on, generals and instructors tried by tactics to weld the military forces together, a course which certainly led to the battlefield, but not to any independent action of the mind; and they obtained by this means masses of men subservient to their will, and transformed by exact formations and orders of battle into automata, which only needed a word of command to set them in motion, and cause them to move with the precision of clockwork.

Indeed, we have excellent illustrations of these "orders of battle" in every military treatise from Polybius to Lloyd and Roquancourt, but the most interesting are those of Tamerlane, to which he devoted enormous pains, boasting that before engaging in a battle he had passed through his mind innumerable methods of formation for attack before issuing any orders.

### ANONYMOUS REFLECTIONS ON THE CONDUCT OF WAR.

Real warfare, that is, the use of prepared means adapted to special requirements, was not considered a suitable subject for theory, but was left to natural talent.

We cannot quite agree with Clausewitz here; it certainly was not the case since Cæsar in Europe, and in Asia from the days of Darius. Not even in China where existed excellent libraries of military lore and strategic geography.

Gradually war developed from the hand-to-hand fighting of the Middle Ages into something more regular and systematic, the conduct of war became a subject for reflection ; these reflections, however, are generally found in memoirs and narratives, and they occur incidentally only, and, as a rule, are anonymous.

That is so only to some extent ; certainly the Italian *condottieri* went further, and Machiavelli wrote and studied theory, and wrote seven books on the Art of War, as well as the celebrated Prince, and notes on Livy ; and, indeed, I believe the " Wisdom of the Ancients " as to war was quite well known among Saracens, Greeks, and Crusaders all through the feudal times. Certainly the theory of lines of communications, and food supply, and decisive points was known to Chaucer and Froissart and all the English generals in France during the Hundred Years' War, and to Genoese and Venetians, who fed the Barons and their followers going eastward. I have read very good mediæval descriptions of Richard Cœur de Lion's strategy by sea and land.

#### THE WANT OF A THEORY BEGAN TO BE FELT.

As these questions became more and more subjects of interest, and history became more and more critical in its character, the urgent need for fixed maxims and rules appeared, so that the controversies and conflicting opinions naturally arising out of military matters might be brought to some definite point.

This storm of opinions having no central point round which to revolve, and knowing no settled laws, must have been very distasteful to men's minds.

It might be to the minds of philosophers, but it was very agreeable to the Visconti, and Sforza, and Percies, and Talbots, and Warwicks, and the Baronial robbers by the Rhine.

#### ENDEAVOURS TO LAY DOWN SOME SYSTEM.

An endeavour was made, therefore, to lay down maxims and rules, and even an entire system for the art of war, by means of which it was proposed to attain a positive object, without taking into consideration the endless difficulties which the art of war presents in this respect. The conduct of war exceeds all definite bounds in almost every direction, and every system of hide-bound regulations has the very restricting and cramping character of a

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"Synthesis," and hence arises the unavoidable difference between such theories and their practice.

But this remark would also apply to law and morality ; English law now and French law before the Revolution of 1789 have bewildered humanity more than Vegetius and Frontinus and Folard puzzled soldiers, and the time and thought now devoted to the rules of methodical games would conquer Asia.

#### DIFFICULTIES OF THE SUBJECT.

But theorists very soon felt the difficulties of the subject, and thought themselves justified in setting theory on one side, and once again directing their attention to material things and their one-sided activity. They wished, as in the science of preparation for war, to arrive at fixed and positive results ; and, therefore, they resolved only to take into consideration such things as could be reduced to mere scientific rule and order, and wanted to make the art of war an art of dynamic force without reference to relative immaterial brain or moral power.

This is common still ; nor can the average English "Don" or M.P. or tactician learn from any lessons that in war the immaterial, the moral and unseen brain force are as three or ten to one compared with mere material or physical force. A leading official recently told me that he could get £100 for brick or zinc easier than £1 for books or lectures.

#### SUPERIORITY OF NUMBERS.

Superiority of numbers being a material condition, they selected it as being among those most conducive to success in war, as by combination of time and place it could be reduced to mathematical rules. They thought they could safely ignore all other conditions as they might be supposed to be equal on both sides, and therefore their value to any one side was neutralised. This would have been right enough if it had been done in order to gain a knowledge of the true proportion of this factor, but to lay it down as an unalterable rule, as the only rule, and to find the whole secret of the art of war in the formula, "At a given moment, at a given point, to bring up a superior force" was quite impracticable.



But concentration for FORCE, if force be properly defined, is undoubtedly the main thing in all enterprises of humanity, and this doctrine was accepted by Napoleon and by Jackson as well as by Gustavus and Marlborough. The mistake was in forgetting moral force. Define FORCE in war. "It never troubles the wolf how many the sheep be."

#### PROVISIONING OF TROOPS.

Another set of theorists wished to make the provisioning of troops on fixed lines the chief factor in the higher art of war. By this means definite figures were arrived at, it is true, but figures which were based on quite arbitrary calculations, which could not possibly stand any practical test.

But Napoleon said, in 1807, "Give me corn and brandy, and I will drive the Russians out of Poland," and, "The art of war is the art of subsisting." The American Wagner says this also. "A starving army is worse than no army," said Wellington.

#### BASE.

One ingenious person tried to concentrate all thoughts on a Base, under which term various objects were included: the provisioning and supply of an army, its equipment, and the security of such communication with its fatherland as would ensure a safe retreat in the event of its becoming necessary. And he proposed to combine all these things under the idea of a base, and also the extension of the base itself, and the angle which the fighting force made with the base. All this was to be done in order to arrive at a purely geometrical result, quite without value.

The idea of a base is necessary in strategy, and it is a good thing to have arrived at it, but such a use as we have just considered is inadmissible and can but lead to one-sided results; these theorists have come to quite a wrong conclusion, for example, that the best form of attack is the enveloping form.

Whoever the ingenious person whom Clausewitz attacks may have been, he was certainly no fool; enveloping, *i.e.* converging from divergent lines, may have failed against Napoleon and Jackson, but the Germans themselves, *e.g.* von Commaerer, now highly approve of converging attacks, and Wellington at Vittoria, Moltke at Königgratz, and the Japanese in Manchuria, adopted this form of strategy with success.

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### INNER LINES.

As a reaction against this move in the wrong direction, another geometrical principle gained the ascendancy, that of so-called inner or interior lines. Although this principle had a solid foundation, and was based on the truth that actual fighting is the only sure and effective method in war, yet, on account of this very geometrical character, it also is a one-sided theory which can never be carried out in practice.

Why be angry with the use of geometrical phrases by teachers? It saves time. It is only abbreviating words. There is not the least doubt whatever that such writers as Napier and Henderson, when they use the phrase "interior lines," do so with such clearness and fertility of illustration that I believe there is not one officer of our army, who passed in D for promotion, that does not quite understand the failure of French and Allies because of their stupid bungling of exterior lines in the Talavera Campaign, and Captain MacQuoid, in his 'British Strategy,' makes Wellington's inner or interior lines in 1812 obvious to any capacity.

### ALL THESE ATTEMPTS UNSATISFACTORY.

All these attempts at laying down definite systems are to be considered, from an analytic point of view, as merely preliminary steps in the right direction, but, from a synthetical point of view, in so far as their rules and precepts are concerned, they are quite impracticable. They strove after fixed quantities, whereas in war everything is undetermined, and calculations can only be made on varying quantities. They direct attention only to material quantities, whereas the whole art of war is permeated by mental force and the results arising therefrom. They only consider action from a one-sided point of view, whereas war is a state of unceasing strife on each against the other side, which must largely work in ignorance, and makes each force react on the other force.

This is a hard passage, and, in my opinion, the use of words like synthetic and analytic is more puzzling than the use of words like interior lines. But German thought finds metaphysics simple, and certainly Clausewitz makes his meaning clear to metaphysicians, but not to ordinary soldiers. The object of a writer ought to be to convey his ideas to the reader's mind without excessive hard thinking on the reader's part. Metaphysical strategy and dialectical tactics do more harm than good. The ignorance of armies as to the movements of their opponents is called by Colonel L. Hale, "The Fog of War."

## GENIUS MUST NOT BE EXCLUDED.

Such a philosophy could not attain the comprehension of anything that lay outside the region of science and was in the sphere of genius, which altogether despises the restriction of rules. (See Schopenhauer on Genius.)

The soldier is to be pitied who is hedged about with rules and regulations through which he has to break and which hamper genius, and have it in their power not only to check but even to make sport of genius.

But surely not ; if genius gets into positions of command, then genius plays the mischief with methodical folk, *e.g.* Frederick, 1757-1761, and Napoleon, 1796-7-1805.

Surely the best rule must be based on the deeds of a genius, and theory can do no more than explain why and how such things happen.

And how little chance a theory has which places itself in opposition to the mind !

But men of genius are rare, and ordinary men must suffice for ordinary work. Is nothing to be done till a man of genius turns up ? Then our politicians would never make any laws, and juries would never give verdicts. There are no men of genius in parliament, or at the bar, or in politics just now, and few in literature or art. There have not been two dozen generals of genius in 2000 years.

## THE DIFFICULTY OF THEORY WHEN MORAL QUALITIES ARE CONCERNED.

Every theory finds fresh difficulties from the moment in which it comes into contact with the mental province. The arts of painting and building are well enough so long as they have only to deal with their own province ; there is no dispute about mechanical and optical construction. But as soon as mental activity is concerned, and moral and intellectual qualities are involved, the rules of art are worthless.

Medical art has generally merely to do with phenomena of the body, and with animal organisms which are constantly changing, and are never the same for two consecutive months ; this fact makes its practice extremely difficult, and places the judgment of the physician above his science. But how very much more

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difficult it becomes when a question of moral effect comes in, and how much higher do we place the physician of the mind.

But, in ordinary practice, the man who treats the body must also deal with the mental condition of the patient. We cannot always be sending for specialists. The physician has also to study, like the general, the material resources of his victim's pockets.

### MENTAL AND MATERIAL CANNOT BE SEPARATED IN WAR.

Now, in war, it is never possible to separate the mental from the material ; one has to direct one's action equally against both.

Mental force is only visible to the inner eye, and this differs in each person, and not only so, but it varies in each person at different times.

Danger being the central element round which everything in war revolves, courage, that personal feeling of confidence in one's own power, becomes the chief factor in determining one's actions. It is the medium through which each vision must pass before it reaches and impresses the mind, and yet experience teaches all concerned that these apparently immaterial qualities have a definite value in war.

Everybody knows and realises the moral effect of surprises, flank, and rear attacks ; the enemy's courage is not thought so much of from the moment in which he turns his back, and greater efforts are made by the pursuer than the pursued.

The enemy is judged by what is reported as to his capabilities and his experience, and hence each leader carefully weighs and considers the moral tone of his own and of his enemy's troops. All these and similar intellectual and moral conditions have been learned by experience and observation, and constantly recur, and may be reckoned as real quantities of a specific kind. And of what use would any theory be which did not take them into consideration ?

### NECESSITY FOR A CLOSER VIEW OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS.

In order to appreciate rightly the difficulties of the problem which is contained in any theory for the conduct of war, and to be able to deduce from it all the characteristics which such a theory

should have, we must take a closer view of the elements which are essential to all effective action in war.

#### FIRST ELEMENT: MORAL FORCE AND ITS EFFECTS.

The first of these elements is moral force and its effects.

War is primarily the expression of hostile feeling ; but in the great modern combats which we call war, the feeling of hostility disappears and there is little individual hostility among the soldiers, although their actions are very hostile and fatal. But even in most civilised wars the element of hostility is never altogether absent throughout.

National hatred, which is seldom lacking in modern wars, may be considered as a substitute for the personal hate of the old warfare, and even when national hatred is not present, and no personal hostility exists in the beginning, the feeling is kindled on the battlefield itself, for any force exercised upon us by any one, even by another's orders, will excite us to revenge against himself rather than against the higher power whose orders he only carries out. This is human, or animal, if you will, but it is so.

One is accustomed in theory to consider war as an abstract measure of strength, in which feeling plays no part. That is one of the thousand errors which theorists commit, because they do not see the consequences of their theory.

Moreover, in the course of the campaign, many passions are excited in such a combination of men of all ranks and habits—ambition, desire for promotion, and profit, and enthusiasm, and excitement of all kinds, and the contagion of companionship and emulation among corps and companies.

The French and German dead were found interlocked at Ligny. The Turks and Russians fought till they were piled up in heaps at Lovtcha and elsewhere. The wars of religion were characterised by horrid animosity throughout. It was said that an apostle would have become a brigand in the "Thirty Years' War." The French and Spanish in the Peninsular War inflicted indescribable cruelties on each other. Lord Byron says, describing the battle of Thrasimene, 217 B.C.—

"And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds,  
To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,  
An earthquake roll'd unheeding away !  
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet."

## DANGER.—COURAGE.

Finally, there is the element of danger, in the midst of which all military actions must be performed, as the birds move in air and the fish in the sea.

The influence of danger is felt by the mind, either directly or instinctively, or through the understanding and reason. The first would have the result of arousing a desire for escape, and in so far as that cannot be accomplished, fear and anxiety. When this desire is not excited, then it is courage which counteracts the instinct of escape. Courage is by no means an act of the understanding, but a feeling like fear. One is the desire for physical preservation, the other is the fixed resolve for moral preservation. Courage is a nobler instinct. But for this reason it does not allow itself to be used as a helpless instrument, which acts in a prescribed manner to bring about certain results. Courage is also not simply a counteraction to danger, which neutralises its effect, but a peculiar power in itself.

## THE INFLUENCE OF DANGER.

But in order to estimate rightly the extent of the influence of danger upon those engaged in war, one must not limit it to the physical danger of the moment. It dominates the soldier, not only as far as it concerns himself, but also through the imagination at other times; in fine, not only directly of itself, but also indirectly through the anxiety and mental pressure which it entails on the person responsible for exposing others to danger. Who can undertake a great battle without having his mind more or less disturbed and perplexed by the thought of the responsibility which rests upon the decision in such an important and terrible matter?

All practical work in war is always performed amidst serious risk of injury to those concerned, except of course the work of those who only draw up the conditions and plans; but these are responsible for danger to others. Hence the phrase "ferocious fools," as applied to statesmen who go to war without being ready.

Napoleon says (Maxim lxxxi.) :—

It is rare and difficult to possess at one time all the qualities of a great general. What is most desirable (because that draws a man out at once of the

common line) is to maintain an equilibrium between his mind and abilities, and his will and courage. If courage prevails more in his composition, the general will undertake designs, the whole possibility of the attainment of which he has not thought out ; on the other hand, he will not dare to carry his ideas into execution, if his will or courage is inferior to his abilities.

The poet Addison, in his *Campaign*, gives the following admirable description of the tactical abilities of one of the greatest of generals :—

“ ’Twas then great Marlbrô’s mighty soul was prov’d  
That in the shock of charging hosts unmov’d,  
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,  
Examin’d all the dreadful scenes of war ;  
In peaceful thought the field of death survey’d,  
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,  
Inspir’d repuls’d battalions to engage,  
And taught the doubtful battel where to rage.”

It is no wonder that the Marquis de Feuquières considered the proper selection of a commander one of the most important and critical responsibilities of a Sovereign or a State. Upon this he writes a chapter—“Of the care Princes ought to take in forming generals for their service, and how necessary it is for them to gain by their own experience a competent knowledge of the persons they design for command, and to award them in proportion to their services.” The value of a sound strategic plan vigorously executed is incalculable ; no reward is too great for a successful general.



## CHAPTER II.

### INFLUENCE OF THE MENTAL QUALITIES OF A LEADER.

THE peculiar mental qualities of the leader have a great influence upon the spirit of the army. One expects very different things from an imaginative person of little practical experience, than one does from a person who is known to be calm and sagacious.

Alexander the Great and Napoleon were both imaginative and inexperienced, and yet they had the entire confidence of their troops from the start. They fired the imaginations alike of veteran officers and recruits. After Issus the Macedonian seemed a god, and when Buonaparte reached Milan at the age of twenty-six, he was called "either a demon or a demigod," and he never lost his influence. Jackson had little practical experience before his Valley campaign. Anything is better than a routine wiseacre. Study is a better guide than experience. Veterans against savages or half-civilised enemies fail utterly in warfare against organised armies.

### DIVERSITY OF MENTAL CAPACITY.

The great diversity of the mental capacity of those in high places causes the great diversity of opinions as to the best "means" for arriving at the desired "end," which we have already set forth, and which permits of so great a part being played by chance.

Fortune only favours those who deserve her attentions. If a man look attentively, he shall see Fortune. At first she turns her locks, but, if these are not grasped, her bald pate. The best sacrifice to Fortune or Chance is constant toil—study, books, energy. Napoleon disclaimed all ideas about very great diversity in capacity. But those in high places love ease, rich folk love enjoyment. There has been very little diversity of opinion among great leaders as to the best principles of war and the best methods of crushing an enemy. The wrangling and diversity of opinion arise because incapable folk get high places. When sophisticated rhetoricians meddle with the fortunes of a race, its downfall is at hand. A licentious Alcibiades is not as fatal as a metaphysical strategist.

But popular opinion and reputation for invincibility must not be disregarded. Men often become what they think they are, what the public believe they are. "There is nothing, good or bad, but thinking makes it so." The Roman



generals attached much importance to this belief or fallacy of mankind. Cæsar said to the pilot in the tempest, "*Cæsarem portas et fortunam ejus.*" Sylla chose the name of "Felix," and not of "Magnus," and, as Lord Bacon says in his Essay XL. on Fortune, "It hath been noted, that those who ascribe openly too much to their own wisdom and policy, end unfortunately."

### THEORY AND TALENT.

The effect produced upon the enemy by any measure of strategy and tactics is the best evidence of its value.

Every theory must be confined to some *class* of phenomena, and deal with generalities only ; it can never deal with any individual cases, which must in all instances be left to the judgment and decision of the person in immediate charge.

It is natural, therefore, that, in such a matter as war, which is built upon general principles and largely dependent upon circumstances, and which is so often determined by unexpected and extraordinary accidents, more must, of necessity, be left to talent, and less use can be made of theoretical guides than is the case in any other sphere of activity.

As a Hungarian officer said of Napoleon, "He knows nothing of the regular rules of war ; he is sometimes on our front, sometimes on our flank, sometimes in the rear. There is no supporting such a gross violation of rules." And yet Napoleon had mastered all the rules . . . but he applied them with imagination\* and judgment.

The tendency of modern war since 1870 is undoubtedly in this direction. Individuality of action on the part of subordinates . . . always acting in harmony with the general schemes of the staff, is a leading principle of modern war, which was largely adopted at the close of the South African War and in Manchuria. A military dry-as-dust is even more intolerable than a typical Education Board inspector.

### UNRELIABILITY OF DATA.

Then there is a very great difficulty arising from the unreliability of all data. This means that all actions must necessarily be planned and carried out in a more or less uncertain light, which,

\* Untutored imaginations are seldom helpful and usually dangerous. Napoleon's fertile originality was aided by consummate knowledge of military history ; hence the breadth and potency of his conceptions. Ordinary men slavishly follow precedents, but great captains, inspired yet unfettered by them, opportunely create fresh ones.—ED. U. S. M.

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like a fog or moonshine, gives things a somewhat exaggerated and unnatural size and appearance.

Talent must discover what this feeble light does not fully disclose, or it must be left to chance; so once again we find that in lieu of an objective knowledge we must rely upon talent or good fortune.

I do not think that either Napoleon, or Moltke, or Oyama would agree with Clausewitz. Napoleon's letter to Joseph says that war is not a conjectural art, and he blamed Masséna for not remembering this principle in connection with the lines of Torres Vedras. He impressed on Joseph that war is a business like any other business, and that a general's duty is to find out what his enemy is doing. Alexander kept geographers and savants, and got the best topographical and historical advice about every country he traversed, and about every possible plan open to the enemy. So did Tamerlane. Never trust to fortune. Be equal to either extremity of fortune.

### IMPOSSIBILITY OF THEORY BEING ABSOLUTE.

With materials of this kind, it is absolutely impossible to construct a theory which shall be capable of supporting a leader and protecting him from all unexpected contingencies like a scaffolding. He would soon find himself in situations where his support would fail him, and he would be thrown upon his own resources, and have to trust to his own courage and ability (Talent). He would not be supported by his theory, and very likely would be in opposition to it. However many-sided and all-embracing it might appear to be, the result would always be the same, that a genius would trust to his own judgment and act independently of rules, and that theory would be proved to be opposed to practice.

I cannot agree with this theory, and really it is very much wiser in appearance than in reality. It seems to me that admirers of Clausewitz often mistake any appearance of profundity for wisdom. Deep thinking makes hard reading. Read hard, and, having a well-packed head, use your brains with cheerful alertness. Here is a criticism of young Napoleon which might also be applied to the Archduke Charles in 1796. Young, and at the same time capable; using the natural advantages of the territory to support the bravery of his troops; with a mind which was not only accurate and decisive, but comprehensive in its observations; unhampered by control or by principle; opposed to generals who could not think of a boy of twenty-six as their equal; with the best army and the finest theatre of war in Europe; finally, with a genius independently developed, and with conceptions of his profession which

summarised the experience of his greatest predecessors, Buonaparte performed feats that seemed miraculous, even when compared with those of Hoche, Jourdan, or Moreau, which had already so astounded the world. (See Rose, 'Life of Napoleon,' and Sloane also.)

#### TWO WAYS OF GETTING OUT OF THE DIFFICULTY.

There are two ways of getting out of this difficulty. First, what we have said as to the general nature of military action must not be understood to apply in all cases and to every person irrespective of rank.

In the lower ranks the chief quality called into request is personal self-sacrifice, but the intellectual qualities are not so called upon, and have a lesser part to play. The field of possible occurrences over which reflection is necessary is far smaller, possible ways and means are fewer in number, data are distinct and often visible.

But the higher up the scale we go, the greater and more varied are the difficulties, and the more one has to take into consideration. Until, when the highest rank, that of commander-in-chief, is reached, almost every intellectual quality is called into request, rules and data are practically non-existent, and almost everything must depend upon his own genius. It is easier to lay down theoretical rules for the conduct of a battle than to assign to that battle its place and use in a general scheme. In one case, physical qualities, armaments, and persons are brought into contact, and although mental force must be involved, a battle is primarily a material contest.

In the latter case, *i.e.* the results of a battle when the material has played its part, and the consequences have become motives for future action, one has to deal with the moral element.

In short, tactics are far more easily reduced to a theory than strategy can be.

Yet strategy has depended in all ages on a few simple principles—(a) that armies, like other bodies of men, must be fed, and (b) unlike other bodies of men, must get a lavish supply of death-dealing materials, and (c) that two men will *ceteris paribus* defeat one; and hence concentration of force is desirable. Tactics change with weapons, and therefore require alteration every generation. But we can learn the strategy of Napoleon from the campaigns of Alexander, Marlborough, and Frederick.

## THEORY SHOULD BE A GUIDE, AND NOT A TYRANT.

The second fact that makes any theory possible is that it need not necessarily be in the form of *direction* for action.

As a general rule, when one has to deal with constantly recurring and similar actions, though there may be some trifling differences, they are capable of being reduced to a theory, and of becoming a subject for careful study. Study is essential to comprehending every theory. Constant and analytical investigation alone leads to knowledge, and, when brought to bear on the results of experience, in this case on military history, brings about a thorough familiarity with the subject in question.

The more nearly theory attains this object, the more does it become subjective rather than objective, and the more effective it will prove when a decision must be left to personal talent, because such knowledge will have developed the mind.

If theory investigates the essential component parts of war ; if it separates and makes distinct matter which appears at first sight inextricable ; if it explains the means and shows their probable effects, and sends a critical searchlight over the whole field of war, then it has fulfilled its chief duties. Then it becomes a real guide to him who would fain learn the art of war from books ; it sheds a light on his path and facilitates his movements, aids his judgment, and prevents him from error.

If an expert spend half his time in trying to thoroughly clear up an obscure subject, he will, in all probability, know more about it than a person who tries to master it in a short time.

Theories are laid down in order that each successive student need not go through the drudgery of finding out everything for himself and disentangling a network of difficulties, but that he may find the matter in some order and with some light shed upon it.

It should serve to assist in the education of the future leader in war, as an aid in his self-instruction, but should not hamper him on the battlefield. It should be to him as the wise teacher who forms and enlightens the mind of a youth, without keeping him in leading-strings all his life.

If rules and maxims arise out of theoretical considerations, theory will not oppose this natural law of the mind ; where the arch

rests on such a keystone, it serves to develop the natural tendency to initiative, and this only to satisfy the law of reason, and to fix the point towards which all lines converge, not in order to form an algebraical formula for the battlefield.

Rules and regulations should be, to a thinking mind, more as outlines to be considered and filled in, than definite marks indicating the way which must be followed.

The veteran, Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, 1842, who was wounded in the Peninsula, 1809, says, "By reading alone you will be distinguished. . . ." Every great soldier since Alexander, including Mongolians and Italian Condottieri, and soldiers of fortune in the Thirty Years' War, was as well educated as his means would allow. Suvoroff (or Suwarrow) cursed ignorance in forcible language in his 'Soldier's Catechism.'

Suvoroff hated Ignorance, and indeed it is a great mistake to suppose that the Slavonic upper and richer classes are ignorant and uncultured. A large proportion of Polish and Russian gentlemen are very well educated in general knowledge indeed, and Polish ladies were and are brilliantly accomplished. The renowned Russian said—

"But there is another enemy greater than the hospital, the d—mn'd 'I don't know!' From the half-confessing, the guessing, lying, deceitful, the palavering, equivocating, squeamishness, and nonsense of 'don't know' many disasters originate. Stammering, hacking—and so forth; it's shameful to relate! A soldier should be sound, brave, firm, decisive, true, honourable! Pray to God! From Him comes victory and miracles! God conducts us! God is our General! For the 'I DON'T KNOW' an officer is put in the guard. A staff-officer is served with an arrest at home.

"Instruction is light! Not instruction is darkness. The work fears his master! If a peasant knows not how to plough, the corn will not grow! One wise man is worth three fools! and even three are little, give six! And even six are little, give ten! One clever fellow will beat them all—overthrow them—and take them prisoners! In the last campaign, the enemy lost 75,000 well-counted men, perhaps not much less than 100,000. He fought desperately and artfully, and we lost not a full thousand. There, brethren, you behold the effect of military instruction! Gentlemen officers, what a triumph!"

Von Moltke said that the success or failure of a campaign depended mostly upon the preparations made for it, and the manner in which it was entered into.

He also ascribed the total failure of the French generals in 1870 to their numerous and easy successes against inferior enemies in Africa and elsewhere, for which honours, decorations, and medals were showered upon them. They came to think themselves heaven-born leaders without taking the trouble to learn how to lead; they stepped into the campaign of 1870, full of bluster and self-confidence, with fond notions of a parade march to Berlin. They were encountered by the Germans, whose leaders one and all during peace had made themselves masters of the art of war by intense study and yearly practice at

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manceuvres. The power of knowledge on one side, the weakness of ignorance on the other, soon worked out their natural results—so it must ever be.\*

### THEORY A USEFUL AID.

If we look at theory in this light, it no longer appears to be so much in opposition to practice as it did at first. It becomes a useful aid to the conduct of war, and, in conjunction with the intellect, will harmonise with practice, and the great difference which existed between dogmatic and impracticable theories and common-sense action may be done away with, and theory will no longer be made the excuse, as has often occurred, for narrow-minded and ignorant persons to cover their own want of capacity.

Napoleon wrote to Marshal Marmont on the 14th October, 1813, at Breitenfeld, from Reudnitz: "I sent you an account of the battle fought by Gustavus Adolphus (in the early part of the seventeenth century) in positions similar to those which you occupy."

M. de Bausset relates that when Napoleon was presiding over the Congress of Princes at Erfurth, 1808, he told the Prince Primate that when he had the honour of being a second lieutenant of artillery, he was quartered with a good garrison library, and that he read every book in the library relating to the art of war three times over. He also said to General Coulaincourt, "Though I denied myself food when I was young in order to buy books, sometimes I was obliged to read at the shops of dealers in second-hand books."

Wellington tells us that he read regularly four hours a day from the date of the battle of Seringapatam, 1799, till Waterloo, 1815.

Colonel Henderson says, "In the well-stocked library of the Lexington Institute, Jackson (Stonewall) found every opportunity of increasing his professional knowledge. He was an untiring reader, and he read to learn. The wars of Napoleon were his constant study. He was an enthusiastic admirer of his genius; the swiftness, the daring, and the energy of his movements appealed to his every instinct."

If the British War Office had studied the works of Pelet-Narbonne, Muller, Rohne, Von Janson, and Kuropatkin, it could never have imagined that the Army which it proposed to send to the Transvaal could quickly, and without immense losses, conquer the Boers, armed as they were armed, with the best type of rifle. And the significance of the modern perfected rifle the English might have learned from the history of the Chilian War, 1891.

### NATURE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The nature of ways and means has to be taken into consideration. In tactics the means are trained and disciplined forces to

\* See an able article by "Diogenes" in the UNITED SERVICE MAGAZINE for February, 1900.

carry on the battle. The desired end is victory. This can be more precisely explained later, when we come to consideration of the combat itself. Here we confine ourselves to this statement, that compelling the enemy to retreat from the field of battle is a sign of victory. By means of this retreat strategy achieves the object which it had in mind when it planned the battle. A victory may be designed for the purpose of weakening the enemy's forces, or only in order to gain possession of a position. Therefore, the result which it is desired to attain must have an influence on the preparation and conduct of a battle, and therefore it must be an object for tactical as well as strategical consideration.

Napoleon considered that merely compelling the enemy to retire without putting him in so bad a position that he could be little effective for some time to come was futile. A system of merely compelling an enemy to retire without crushing his resources will never lead to the object of war, which is to annihilate the fighting force of the enemy. Wellington was forced to retreat again and again in the Peninsula, only to start again as fresh as ever the next spring; and Lee is severely censured for being satisfied with merely tactical results at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. Had he hearkened more to strategists, probably the Federals would have collapsed at the end of 1862.

#### CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING A CAMPAIGN.

There are certain circumstances which may affect a campaign throughout and more or less influence its course, therefore this must be taken into consideration in the disposition of armed forces. Such are—

General locality.

Time of day.

Weather.

Locality might, strictly speaking, have no influence whatever if the battle were to take place on a perfectly level and uncultivated plain. Such a possibility might arise in a country of steppes, but in European warfare, on account of the cultivated state of the greater part of Europe, such a contingency is almost inconceivable; hence a war between civilised nations, in which the general configuration of the country has no influence, is hardly possible.

In the plains of Poland the strategy has been largely influenced by the number, volume, and direction of the rivers, and by that fifth element—mud.



## Napoleon's maxims (cxv.)—

A general, commanding-in-chief a naval army, and a chief of a land army, are men who need different qualities. The qualities for the latter are inborn, but those for the former are acquired by experience alone. The art of warfare is an art of genius and inspirations. In maritime war nothing depends on genius and inspiration ; all is positive, a matter of experience. The sea-general has but need of one science—navigation.\* The land commander has need of all, or of equivalent to all, *e.g.* that of profiting by universal experience and knowledge. The one has nothing to guess ; he knows the position and strength of his antagonists. The other knows nothing for certain, never sees his foe, does not know exactly where he is. When the armies are face to face, the least accident of the ground, the smallest wood, will hide a part of the army. The most practised eye cannot tell if he sees the whole of the hostile army or but three-quarters. It is by the eyes of the mind, the conjoint use of his reasoning powers, that he sees, knows, and judges. The naval commander has no need of a practised eye, none of the enemy's forces are hidden from him. That which makes the work of the land commander so difficult is the necessity of feeding so many men and animals ; if he will not submit to being guided by the commissaries, he will not be able to stir an inch, and his designs will fail. He of the sea is never so embarrassed ; he carries everything with him. He has not to reconnoitre, no ground to examine, no battlefield to study. The Indian Ocean, and the American Ocean, the Channel, all are but the same liquid. The most skilled have no advantage over the least, except by the knowledge of the winds prevailing in such and such a quarter, by foreseeing those which ought to prevail, or by atmospheric signs—qualifications acquired by experience, and by experience alone. The land commandant never knows the battlefield where he is to operate. His glance is an experienced one, he has no positive information ; the data given to him to arrive at a knowledge of localities are so casual that almost nothing is taught by experience. It is the acuity of seizing at once the connection which the ground bears to the nature of countries, it is a gift termed "the soldier's eye," which great generals have received from nature ; yet the observations made on topographical charts, the ease given by education and habit of reading from them, may be of some assistance.

A naval commander depends more on his captains than a land commander on his generals. This latter is in a position to take on himself the direct command of the troops to bear on all points, and of remedying false moves. A naval general, personally, has influence but over the men of his own ship. The smoke prevents the signals from being seen, the winds change or are not the same over all space covered by his line. It is then, of all professions, the one in which subalterns may take the most on themselves.

Time of day, as a general rule, has but little influence on the combat ; but in some cases the difference between day and night,

\* This was written before a ship-of-war became an elaborate concentration of every variety of machinery.



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and the question as to whether a great battle should be commenced in the morning or the evening, are material considerations.

The battle of Laon was principally won by the splendid night surprise of Marmont by the allies. Night marches followed by attacks at dawn have been more common in the American, South African, and Manchurian campaigns than in those of Napoleon. Tel-el-Kebir was a brilliant example of a night march followed by a morning attack. Retirements by night were of frequent occurrence in the Peninsula and in the American Civil War.

Weather, also, very rarely has any definite influence, and as a rule fog is the only condition of weather which at all affects the course of events.

Terrible weather prevailed in the Gambetta campaigns, November to January, 1870-1871. The winter campaigns in 1862 were also very distressing, and Napoleon had experiences of all varieties of seasons in Egypt and Syria, and in Italy and Germany. The worst experiences of his army were in Poland 1806-7, Spain 1808, and Russia 1812.

### AN ENGAGEMENT IN BAD WEATHER—BRIVES, JANUARY 9TH, 1871.

On the 9th, at 2 P.M., the Division continued its march towards Brives, along the left bank of the brook. But, to the inconvenience which snow and fog caused this day to all the troops of the army were added, in the case of the Xth Corps, the extraordinary difficulties which were entailed at this time of the year in marching through hilly country, full of steep slopes, ravines, and hollow roads. Cavalry and artillery had to dismount and lead their horses; every falling horse detained the column. The General Commanding had to ride on a limber; the Headquarter Staff marched on foot. The Corps Artillery could not be employed at all, and could scarcely be brought along the frozen defiles. It was sent back at noon to Lavenay, by way of Le Pont-de-Braye, under escort, with the view of advancing on the following day by the better road through Vancé.

General v. Woyna, in accordance with the orders which he had received, had directed his march on Brives. When he reached La Chênehuère Château, after driving off some hostile detachments, the engagement at Chahaigues had already come to an end. As it appeared doubtful whether the 20th Division had continued its march at all, and whether his detachment unaided could successfully cross the low ground which was strongly occupied by the French, General v. Woyna retired to the Tusson brook.

When the advanced guard of the 20th Division reached Brives at 3.30 P.M., it was received with a brisk fire from the heights north of the village. Off the roads even infantry could only move with great difficulty, and at a slow pace, so that any turning movement became impossible, and nothing remained but to make a frontal attack on and alongside the road.

This was carried out with great resolution by detachments of the 56th and 79th Regiments, and the enemy was forced to retreat.

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When an army is well managed, it is not ruined by bad weather ; but when the brains of the leaders or the arrangements of politicians are defective, it perishes in bad weather. For example, Von Werder's army in the Lisaine was very comfortable in hostile territory in the terrible winter of 1871 ; but Bourbaki's superior army was perishing in its own country, and when obliged to retreat into Switzerland, its state was indescribable. Some had bits of wood on their bare feet, others wore wooden sabots. The frost was below zero, and yet "hundreds had no socks and no boots, and parts of their feet were frozen. None had washed or changed their clothes for a long period. For three days they had neither food nor fodder, and even prior to that period of absolute famine one loaf was often shared between eight men."

The Japanese and Russians did very well in Manchuria in bad weather, better than MacMahon's army in good weather. One great German writer who signs himself "Sarmaticus" (the very able Colonel Liebert) is in favour of a winter campaign as being the most favourable for artillery movement in Russia. There have been some winter campaigns that have not been studied. There was one, for instance, in the American war against the mother country in 1775-6, when the revolutionary forces marched from Boston, a distance of nearly 400 miles, all the way up through the State of Maine to surprise Quebec. They were unsuccessful, but I have never been able to find a detailed military account of that expedition. Yet there is no reference anywhere that I know of to any great suffering on account of the snow or cold, or want of provisions. And amongst the American cavalry (and in England it is more so still probably) there is a constant requirement of service in the field in winter in which there is no particular hardship on account of snow or ice, although the temperature is infinitely lower than anything that it could have been in that winter in France, and probably even quite as severe as what Napoleon experienced in 1812. (See Bourbaki's Campaign, *Proceedings of the Royal Artillery Institution*, No. 3, vol. xxii.)

Gustavus, Turenne, Frederick, as well as Alexander, Hannibal, and Cæsar who was a brilliant author, orator, and rake, as well as a consummate general, all acted on the same principles. As Napoleon says, "to keep one's forces well together, to bear speedily on any point, to be nowhere vulnerable, such are the principles that ensure victory ; to inspire fear by the reputation of one's arms, that is what maintains the reputation of one's arms." Observe Napoleon lays no stress on cant, or philosophic humanitarianism, or hysterical *ententes*. Read and reread the history of campaigns, they are much more real and instructive than the precedents of equity courts or the whims of vote-catching politicians—"read and reread the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Eugene, Frederick, Wellington, Napoleon, Lee, Grant, Oyama"—take them for your models—"that is the only way of becoming a great captain, to obtain the secrets of the Art of War."

M. de Thiebault tells us that Frederick the Great of Prussia, when a young man, before his father's death, never appeared in company till noon, though he rose early in the morning, as he devoted five or six hours daily to private and serious study.

Michaud says that Turenne in his early youth made most careful studies in

military history, and when he became a general all his campaigns were most carefully planned, no detail was too minute for his prescience, and he varied his schemes according to topographical conditions, the habitudes of his opponents, and the character of their generals ; regarding all of which he obtained accurate information betimes.

Marlbrough's military qualities have been described in a recent number of this magazine ; and its readers who are familiar with the classics will have recognised his resemblance to Hannibal as portrayed by Livy and Polybius. But a more singular resemblance is that of Wellington to Hannibal in regard to both physical and mental qualities. See Alison, vol. vii., 114, 115, edit. 1854. "Capable, when the occasion required, or opportunity was offered, of the most daring enterprises, he was yet cautious and wary in his general conduct ; prodigal of his own labour, regardless of his own person, he was avaricious only of the blood of his soldiers. Endowed by nature with an indomitable soul, and a constitution of iron, he possessed that tenacity of purpose and indefatigable activity which are ever necessary to great achievements ; prudent in council, sagacious in design, he was yet prompt and decided in action. His activity in war was unwearied, his frame capable of enduring unbounded fatigue. No general ever revolved more carefully the probable danger of an enterprise before undertaking it. None possessed in a higher degree the eagle eye, the arm of steel, necessary to carry it into execution. Skilfully seizing the opportunity of victory, he studiously avoided the chances of defeat ; aware that a single disaster would at once endanger his prospects and strengthen his opponents. Of food and drink he took what nature, not pleasure, dictated."

I may be prejudiced, but I think this piece of criticism much superior to any passage in Clausewitz, and this without the least desire to disparage this great German authority.

## CHAPTER III.

### CÆMMERER AND CLAUSEWITZ—KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

IN our last chapter we illustrated Clausewitz's views as to night marches, and fog and mist, and rain, by examples from the Franco-German War; we now give examples from the South African War.

Nevertheless, the night's issue still hung in the balance. In reinforcing his pickets, and in forming an inner line of defence round the railway station, Smith Dorrien had exhausted nearly the whole of his reserves, and the entire circle of defence was warmly engaged. With the Monument and Colliery in his hands, it rested with Viljoen to deliver the finishing blow; but the very factors which hitherto had helped him—fog, and the great extent of the perimeter—now reacted against him. Approaching the town from the north, he found every point of vantage held; in the darkness and mist his men lost cohesion and fired upon one another, and he was unable to ascertain how Botha's attack had succeeded. Concluding, finally, that the co-operation had altogether failed, and dreading artillery fire when daylight should come, he called off the whole of his men before dawn. The manner in which the numerous Boer columns converged in darkness and fog upon seven different points and delivered all their attacks within a few minutes of midnight, was highly creditable to the Boer leading, while the hardihood shown in the storming of Monument Hill and at one or two other points would have done honour to any army in the world.\*

De Wet had determined to cross at Bartmann's Siding, and to that end blew up the line on either side; but the same storms which had checked Plumer had turned the Duran's Vlei, just to the east of the railway, into an almost impassable swamp, where, in the darkness, men, animals, and wagons fell into indescribable confusion. It was only by extraordinary exertion that the gun and pom-pom were dragged through; then, leaving Fourrie and a hundred men to cover the retreat and extricate what he could, De Wet, fearing to be surprised at daylight, hurried on. In the morning Nanton's armoured train, supported by Colonel Crabbe's small column, came out from Houtkraal Station and drove off Fourrie, who made his retreat to the south, and for some time lost touch with De Wet. When Plumer reached the scene the whole of

\* 'Times History,' v. 124-5.

De Wet's convoy, with forty wagons, much ammunition, a Maxim gun, and thirty prisoners, fell into his hands. Spent with fatigue, and sodden with rain and mud, De Wet's burghers urged their jaded horses north-west towards Strydenburg, with Crabbe snapping terrier-like at their rear, and Plumer struggling on in Crabbe's wake.\*

De Wet himself took heart of grace, and, with all that remained of his weary force, up-saddled at midnight, and, under the mantle of darkness which had so often proved his salvation, rode towards the barrier.

His scouts did their work well, and the British sentries were careless. Through the very homestead of a farm occupied by the New Zealanders, and between it and an infantry picket, De Wet led his band of stalwarts, unobserved and unresisted. Pressing steadily on through the hours of darkness, he crossed the railway eight miles south of Orange River Station, and on the morning of the 24th off-saddled six miles beyond the line. The same morning the Kimberley column awoke from its slumbers, and, ignorant of what had happened, moved west with the laudable intention of pinning the Boers against Plumer, who, with a similar purpose, was marching simultaneously to the east. The result was a lively skirmish between the two friendly forces, which lasted for half an hour before the error was recognised. Plumer and Knox, exhausted and nearly starving, converged upon Hope town on the 25th.†

De Wet had crossed on the 10th. An accident of the weather made the error by which troops were detached to the north bank doubly unfortunate. Between the 10th and the 12th a heavy flood had come down, and the swirling current and holding sands caused so much delay that it was not until the 14th that all the troops and baggage were across, and by that time the two groups of pursuing columns were out of the hunt for the time being. Knox reached Houtkraal late on the 15th; Hamilton De Aar on the 16th.‡

#### VON CÆMMERER ON CLAUSEWITZ.

While decidedly of opinion that Clausewitz is a most valuable writer, and that about one-fourth of his *opus magnum* is well worthy of translation, I am by no means a worshipper at his shrine, as are so many of the Teutonic English at the War Office and in the Cabinet.

We don't worship Germans merely because they are foreigners, but we admire their industry, efficiency, foresight, and love of knowledge and contempt for adult players of boyish games and silly sports. But it is only fair, before we go on in our future articles to translate the less occult and more interesting passages of Clausewitz, to warn our readers that his school is to a considerable extent discounted by the celebrated German author, General von Cæmmerer, and, by way of caution, I give a couple of extracts from Von Donat's excellent translation. The German modern critic ridicules Clausewitz's scheme for war against France, as proposed in 1831. I will have

\* 'Times History,' v. 138.

† 'Times History,' v. 145.

‡ 'Times History,' v. 136-7.

occasion to use Von Cæmmerer more fully later on. Meanwhile, it is clear that Clausewitz's masterpiece was far from complete, and, had he been spared, he would have modified his views ; and the labours of his wife in editing, and our labours in translating, would have very much decreased in severity. The French critic Camon's opinion that Clausewitz "is a perfect muddle head, whom it is impossible to take seriously," might then be in danger of realisation.

Von Cæmmerer says—

I now turn to the question of how Clausewitz intended to carry out the final elaboration of his work. In the notice printed at the head of his work on War, the author expresses himself to the effect that he would bear in mind more precisely THE TWO KINDS OF WAR. "The two kinds of war are, first, those in which the object is the overthrow of the enemy, whether it be that we aim at his destruction politically, or merely at disarming him and forcing him to conclude peace on our terms ; and next, those in which our object is merely to make some conquests on the frontiers of his country, either for the purpose of retaining them permanently, or of turning them to account as matter of exchange in the settlement of a peace. Transition from one kind to the other must certainly continue to exist, but the completely different nature of the tendencies of the two must everywhere appear, and must separate from each other things which are incompatible." From this point of view he intended first to elaborate the rough outlines he had at the time only prepared for the books on the attack and the plan of war, and not till then to revise the first six finished books, which treat in turn of the Nature of War, the Theory of War, Strategy in General, the Combat, the Military Forces, and the Defence.

Now, Delbrück thinks that Clausewitz, when mentioning the second kind of war, and where one wishes to make some conquests on the frontiers of one's country, had in his mind the historical strategy of the eighteenth century and, indeed, not only the strategy of the great King, but also that of his enemies, and thus also that art of war which had more for its object a tiring and wearing out of the adversary than his overthrow, and manœuvring more than fighting. According to that view, Clausewitz, in his intended revision, would have had to cancel absolutely all his severe criticisms on the strategic errors of the preceding epoch of war, and especially those about Daun which I have presented to the reader.

I am, however, of opinion that Clausewitz meant, indeed, to oppose to the attack which directs its efforts on the complete annihilation of the enemy, an attack with a limited object, he also thought to apply his second fundamental principle : "The destruction of the enemy's military forces is the leading principle of war, and for the whole chapter of positive action the direct way to the aim."\*

Strategy, by taking all preliminary details into consideration, as well as the desired results of the battle, assigns to it a particular object, for the achievement of which it is undertaken.

\* 'The Development of Strategical Science,' by Lieut.-General von Cæmmerer, translated by K. von Donat, pp. 112, 113.



But as this object, if attained, does not directly lead to peace, it can only be looked upon as a "means" to an end, and therefore in strategy one can only consider the after results, whatever they may be, as "means."

The conquest of any given position is a result of a battle applied to ground.

But not only are battles with definite objects to be considered merely as instruments to ends but also every aim dependent upon the results of such battles, and, having a common goal, is to be considered only as an instrument. A winter campaign is an instance of the application of these considerations to the time of year.

The main objects, therefore, are simply those events which may be considered as leading directly to peace. All those ways and means which we have already mentioned should be investigated by theory, and their nature and mutual relations, and their possible effects, duly weighed and considered.

Mr. P. Bigelow, on "Winter Campaigns" (*Proceedings of the Royal Artillery Institution*, 13th December, 1894), said: "I think it must be evident that it was not the winter alone that hurt Bourbaki. It was bad management, and I think that in Napoleon's campaign in 1813 there is a pretty general consensus of opinion to-day, that the elements alone did not injure Napoleon; that it was corruption, thievery amongst his officers or contractors—it was thorough bad management. We all remember how, when the troops arrived in Vilna, there was an abundance in the store-houses and still the troops were starving—they could not get at it; those who could, got too much, and the rest got nothing, and the matter is one of particular interest at this moment, because I have noticed latterly, in conversation with officers in staff positions, an exceeding nervousness with regard to a possible war with Russia on the score of winter campaigns; they are always faced by this spectre of the year 1812. I do not know of any book that treats of winter campaigns in such a manner as to have a practical bearing on the possibilities of an invasion of a great country during the winter season, which inevitably would have to be the case in Russia. And the conditions of railway travel, of course, make the experiences of that war of 1812 almost obsolete."

#### ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR STUDY.

The first question is how to arrive at exhaustive and complete details in such matters.

If one were to undertake a searching inquiry into these things

and attain some definite result, one would only be in danger of getting entangled in a network of difficulties, most of which are of necessity placed outside the scope of the theory and conduct of war.

So we turn to the pages of military history, and seek to learn from the experience of others. Doubtless the theory formed in this manner must be somewhat limited, and one which is only really applicable under similar circumstances ; but this is inevitable. Theory can but set forth what it has learnt from studying and comparing the various events in military history, and, in point of fact, this same limitation is less in practice. The great advantage of this method is that the theory based upon historical experience must of necessity be a practical one, and is not in danger of degenerating into a thing of abstruse and hazy notions, which would be of absolutely no practical value.

This has been the advice of every writer and of every teacher in every part of the world, till the cult of games began to be worshipped to the neglect of intelligence in English public schools and universities, about twenty-five years ago, and hence the richer English are now declared by English experts officially to be the worst educated men of their means and rank in the world. This condition of things must soon be changed, or, according to the British Association, the result will be disastrous.

In support of the contention of Clausewitz that "knowledge is power" in the army as well as in civil life, I quote an anecdote about one of Clausewitz's heroes, Blucher, who was described by the Austrian Archduke Albert in these words: "When he was summoned to the command of the army of Silesia, he was seventy years old. Moreover, though he had made very few theoretical studies, he possessed at the same time great experience of war, a correct and prompt judgment, an irresistible tenacity, and a will of iron, which overcame every obstacle. He was much more than a 'sabreur,' and he possessed in General Gneisenau an assistant who possessed all the supplementary qualities in which he was lacking." The following anecdote is told by Von Ense, and proves that Blucher recognised his failings as due to lack of sound preliminary education. When dining with his staff in France, in 1814, after some general conversation he said, addressing his Chief of the Staff, "Gneisenau, if I had studied, what might I not have become? But I wasted my time instead of learning." Gneisenau replied, laughing, "What could you have become more than you are at present? You have attained the highest dignity, that of Marshal, which there is in the State."

Blucher only took that reply for what it was worth, and added, "My friends, I know very well what is in me. In my youth I was careless, I wasted my time gambling, drinking and flirting, sporting, and up to all kinds of games. That is



why I am nothing to-day. Only for that I would have been a very different kind of fellow. Believe me, something great would have been heard of me."

Napoleon wrote to Marshal Davout from Paris, March 27th, 1815: "Make summaries for me of all that which has taken place in other campaigns for the defence of the frontier of the East. Tell me clearly what has been the result of the combined operations of the armies of the Moselle and of the Meuse, and what positions each has taken in order to be able to combine at a given moment." In this letter General Pierron remarks, "It proves that till the very end of his career Napoleon felt the need of supplementing by study a practical experience of war superior to that of any of his contemporaries."

#### GENERAL HOCHÉ.

Bonnechose tells us that Hoche, when sixteen years of age, joined the French Guards of Louis XVI. as private. The soldiers had permission to supplement their pay by working in their leisure. Hoche managed to procure numerous odd jobs with embroiderers in winter and in gardens in summer.

With the money thus secured the young soldier purchased books. He studied the histories of ancient wars and politics very carefully, and thus his intelligence was developed and his enthusiasm was excited. I need scarcely say that by the age of twenty-nine this diligent and wise youth had become one of the most famous generals of his remarkable epoch.

#### VEGETIUS, POLYÆNUS, AND ÆLIAN.

There have existed, as I said in the last chapter, in all times certain fundamental principles on which good combinations of war depend, and by reference to which all military schemes are judged.

These principles are immutable, are independent of any variation in armament or of time and place. They have been more or less skilfully applied for thirty centuries of recorded time, and from Karakorum to Brest, and from South Africa to Canada. They are laid down by Xenophon in his *Cyropædia*. The manœuvres of Alexander before and after Issus resembled in many respects Wellington's operations of 1812-1814. Cæsar was equally successful whether he invaded half-savage Gaul or Britain, or fought against skilful fellow countrymen like Pompey.

Tamerlane has left behind him *Institutes* which might have been written by Moltke or Napier, every page of which bears the impress of a brilliant genius which could organise and direct great masses of men over enormous obstacles, and triumph over every obstacle of nature and art. Jomini very justly remarks that, "in comparing the causes of the victories of Wagram, of Pharsalia, and of Cannæ, one is not surprised to find that each was gained by the same preliminary precautions and principles of action." But every leading officer and instructor, in every country and every age, has urged the sacrifice of play to work, and made self-denial, and study, and literature, and history their first objects, except in England, and in England alone.

The value of the study of history and of knowledge to generals is set forth

by Vegetius, whose 'Art of War' inspired the military genius of Marlborough, just as Plutarch's *Lives* of ancient heroes was the favourite companion of the leisure of Napoleon.

One of the most interesting examples of the importance attached by the ancients to the careful study of precedents of war is found in the collection of stratagems by Polyænus, who dedicated his book to the Emperors Antoninus and Verus just as they were setting out on their campaign against the Parthians. Polyænus collected 900 examples of stratagems, and laid down the axioms that "fortitude conquers by dint of sword, but superior conduct by art," and that "stratagem prevails over courage," and that "the greatest reach of generalship is displayed in those victories that are obtained with the least danger."

"In the heat of a campaign, to hit upon an expedient that shall decide the contest in your favour without waiting the issue of a regular battle is the most infallible criterion of military capacity. And this I have already conceived to be a favourite sentiment of Homer, for what else can he mean by these frequent expressions, "either by artifice or valour," but that we should first employ stratagems and devices against the enemy, and then, if these fail, that valour and the strongest arm must carry it." So Homer ascribes the fall of Troy to the strategic skill of Ulysses—

"Your schemes, your plans effected Ilium's fall,  
And hurled destruction on the Trojan wall."

"And Troy was taught more fatal far to feel  
Ulysses' counsels than the Grecian steel."

So Captain John Bingham, in 1631, translated Ælian's tactics, a fine volume richly illustrated with plates. This is a better work in every way than our War Office has prepared for the past fifty years. Yet it was done in the interests of the artillery company, "the martial company exercising arms in the artillery garden in London." "It containeth the practice of the best generals of all antiquity in the ordering of battailes."

The range and effect of weapons is an important subject tactically: their construction is a matter of comparative indifference, for the conduct of war is not a matter of the gathering together of coal, saltpetre, and sulphur, or of copper and tin, in order to manufacture powder and cannon; but it is dependent upon the proper use and effect of those weapons in their finished state.

Strategy makes use of a map without entering into trigonometrical measurements; it is not concerned with the divisions and subdivisions of a country, or with the military or civil education of its people, or with the manner in which they are governed. In most European states, strategy deals with things as it finds them,

and only takes into consideration anything which is of so peculiar a nature as to have an appreciable effect on war.

But the true temper, and topography, and state of armament, and material, and naval resources of a people, have a very important effect on war. Mistakes as to such questions mislead strategists and statesmen—though strategists are seldom grossly wrong in their calculations. The strategists were right, and the statesmen were wrong, in the United States 1861, in France 1870, and in England in 1899. Whether a country is governed by statesmen or by party charlatans, makes much difference to both enemies and allies.

In this manner the number of subjects for theoretical study is reduced.

The great mass of knowledge and preparation, which is generally used in tactics before a fully equipped army can take the field, becomes welded together before the battlefield is reached, in the same manner as the streams in a country unite in some large river before it empties itself into the sea—their ultimate goal.

Only those things which directly flow towards the sea of war need be studied by those who wish to conduct its operations.

Nowadays there is not much time for “welding” anything together after war breaks out. In 1866 the war was at its crisis in less than a month. The Franco-German War was declared on the 19th July, 1870; the battle of Gravelotte was over, and Metz was invested by the 19th August; and Paris was invested by the 19th September. Nothing but disaster and horrible loss of life and wasteful expenditure are welded together by an unready state, once war begins.

#### PEDANTRY AND RED TAPE.

This result of our considerations is so obvious that no other could have been obtained. This is the only explanation of the fact that many men have achieved great success and made great names for themselves in the highest ranks of the army—even as generals and leaders, whose former lot had been cast on quite different lines. In fact, the most renowned generals have seldom sprung from the most highly cultivated (as far as mere learning is concerned) class of officers, but, as a rule, from among those whose circumstances rather tended to prevent the acquirement of any great amount of so-called knowledge.

Hence those who considered it to be necessary that a future

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general must necessarily be "crammed" with every kind of detailed knowledge, have always been laughed at for absurd pedants.

One can easily see that education on such grounds would be more harmful than otherwise, for the human mind develops according to that by which it is fed, and that alone can make it great which is great, and that which is small and petty tends to retard its development and narrow its sphere of activity, unless, indeed, the individual mind can reject such small and petty ideas as something strange and repugnant to it.

Thus every wise man ridicules the study of grammatical subtleties, and the composition of Latin and Greek verses, to the neglect of the study of ancient literature and history.

### MARTINETTS ARE NOT GENERALS.

There are paltry souls who are excellent in details in times of peace and masters of routine. From morning to night they are grand in minutiae, they are admirable critics of the least disorder in dress, and they are authorities on uniforms, and alter drill-books and regulations every week. Everything is in apple-pie order on their desks and in their offices, and they instruct their subordinates to be as insignificant and fidgety as they are themselves. They get reputations for being "safe men," methodical, regular, exact disciplinarians.

They make the military service abhorrent with their red tape, their formularies, their reports, their tomfooleries.

"But their reputations are only swollen bladders. They are obstacles in the way of the formation of military character, and they block the promotion of capable and high-spirited men. When a crisis comes, their miserable minds and souls are exhausted by paltry preoccupations, and they fail amidst contempt—they are incapable of any fine effort and are wiped out."

Thus wrote the Archduke Albert, the Victor of Custoza. He certainly had sad experience in Austria, but one would imagine he was satirising Pall Mall.

We may conclude this section of our translation and remarks on Clausewitz's theory of strategy, as apart from details of operations, by hoping that we have established the position that in war, as in commerce and in law, knowledge is the basis of all success.

### GUERRILLAS AND PARTISANS.

Nor is it any answer to say that some rude MEN OF GENIUS have arisen in forests, or deserts, or steppes, or veldts, and puzzled and perplexed the ablest military experts of their time. But they did not puzzle dry-as-dust experts a bit more than did the highly educated Alexander, and Gustavus, and Charles XII., and Napoleon. But these so-called rude phenomena were really very well trained and experienced in their own spheres of activity. They

practised martial exercises, and had been inured to toil from youth up. Again, hereditary strategy and tactics prevail in all non-decadent races, and Scotch Highlanders could, and did, upset South British and even Edinburgh tactics from 1400 to 1746.

"There is a freedom in the mountain air,  
And force which bloated ease can never hope to share."

Heroic guerillas and partisans, or an Attila or Zenghis, are not the result of inspiration any more than the leaders of German or French army corps.

But I go further and contend, as I tried to prove in 1901, that the PRINCIPLES underlying guerilla war are the same as those of methodical campaigns among civilised states. De Wet began at once to try and sever the British communications about Kroonstadt and Roodewal, even as Wellington tried to cut Joseph's communications in 1813 between Valladolid and San Sebastian. When Lord Kitchener took the command in South Africa, he endeavoured to scatter, segregate and keep apart, and to crush in detail the Boer commandos, even as Napoleon tried to keep apart and beat in detail, as is clearly demonstrated by Koch, Jomini, and Vial, the forces of Blucher, Schwartzenberg, Bulow, and Winzingerode in 1814.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE chapter in which Clausewitz deals with the value of examples in the study of the Art of War, does not follow in exact order the texts on which we commented extensively in our last chapter, but it relates so manifestly to our observations that it deserves translation at length, nor does it demand much illustration by way of notes.

### VALUE OF HISTORICAL EXAMPLES.

Historical examples render everything more clear and interesting, and constitute the best method of sound criticism for all experimental sciences.

General Scharnhorst, who has written the best book \* on the conduct of war, asserts that historical examples have a leading place in this field of mental effort. He made admirable use of them himself, and if he had survived his last campaign, the fourth part of his new work on artillery would have set forth even more clearly the spirit of observation and study on which his experience relied. Such use is rarely made by theorists. We will therefore try to cause the reader to appreciate the practical benefit which we can derive from examples and illustrations, and the abuse to which they are liable.

### OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE ALONE ENABLE US TO ASCERTAIN MATTERS.

By reason of the fact that observation and experience alone enable us to ascertain, as circumstances and the nature of things demand, those branches of knowledge and varieties of information which are serviceable in any particular war, it is clear that all these kinds of information are applicable to experimental science.

\* *I.e.* up to 1830.

Moreover, they are modified by such a variety of other circumstances and their application, that it is never possible to determine *à priori* the effects which the means employed may bring about.

For example, take the effect of the introduction of gunpowder. Science would teach that a bullet of cast iron, to which the explosion of powder would communicate a velocity of 1000 feet a second, would overturn every living thing in its course. There is no necessity to go to war to demonstrate this truth. But that there are hundreds of secondary circumstances which determine the effect of this new force can only be learned by experience.

#### PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES ARE NOT THE ONLY RESULTS.

That physical consequences are not the only results which we must calculate upon is proved by experience, which enables us to understand the moral effects. For example, in the Middle Ages, when firearms were first used (in the time of our Edward III.), though they were of a very inferior type to what they are to-day, and their physical effect much less, they exercised a much greater moral effect than they now produce.

When Clausewitz wrote an expert soldier armed with Brown Bess and firing from the top of Nelson's column would not hit the dome of St. Paul's; he would now hit it cross easily. De Block, in 'Modern Weapons and Modern War,' proved to his own satisfaction that modern weapons would stop all bayonet charges and cavalry movements, yet desperate bayonet charges took place in South Africa and in Manchuria, and the Boers charged our men, and fired off horseback during the charge, though our men were armed with Lee-Metfords. Till the Crimea our troops had practically the same weapon as was used at Blenheim, warranted not to kill at 250 yards. In the Crimea we had a Minie rifle sighted at 100 to 1000 yards. D'Erlon's great battery at Waterloo was not 800 yards from the Allied Line.

In 1896. British rifle range was up to 3000 yards; effective range, 800.  
Artillery range, 3000 yards.

In 1902. Rifle range was 3000 yards.

„ Field Artillery, 6000 yards.

„ Heavy Artillery, 10,000 yards.

One must have seen the immovable solidity of those heroic columns taught and led by Napoleon, under the most terrible fire



of artillery, to form any idea of what men can do. Hardened like brass by long familiarity with danger, they became so confident in their own strength that they feared no fatigue and recoiled before no opposition, and were always confident that they would conquer.

But if it is necessary to have seen this to believe it, it is, on the other hand, a matter of common knowledge that there are to-day regiments in European armies which would fly at a few cannon shots.

But this is no dissertation on experimental science, and hence there are none of the theories of the Art of War in regard to which it is possible to support every axiom by historic proofs, and it is frequently very difficult to indicate by historical analogy the best procedure to adopt in particular cases. When adopted by a successful commander-in-chief, a certain method or *modus operandi* is shown to be of great efficacy in war ; others repeat it, it is imitated, it becomes the fashion. Its value is demonstrated by brilliant results, it is introduced into instructions, and takes a place in theory, leaving general experience to maintain its value, and we are content with explaining its method and indicating its origin.

But it is another matter to upset an old habit or method which has been supported by experience or to introduce a new one, and theory ought then to prove what it preaches and to refer to historical examples.

#### DIFFERENT FASHIONS OF USING THESE ILLUSTRATIONS.

These illustrations are used in four different fashions :—

1. In order to enable the student the better to comprehend an abstract thought ; for example, in this case a well-chosen historical example will give the thought a clearness which it would otherwise not possess.

2. We can have recourse to historical examples as a means of application which permits the mind to seize a number of petty circumstances which it would never comprehend in a general expression of this thought. But it is precisely in this perception and application that the difference between theory and practice is found.



3. An historical example may be used in support of what one has stated or advanced, and this suffices when the object of the instructor is only to establish the possibility of a fact or an effect.

4. From the exposition of an historical fact, and the relations between such facts, a doctrine can be deduced which at the same time depends on certain facts and is justified by them.

For the first of these purposes it suffices for the most part to mention shortly the fact—historical accuracy is not necessary; fiction would do, but facts are better because they have a closer likeness to the thought whose reality they express.

In the second case, also, historical accuracy is not necessary; but more detailed treatment is desirable. But when, by the exposition of an historical fact (3), the object is to prove some general truth, it is necessary, in some degree, to bring the whole scene before the eyes of the reader, and, without omitting any details, to develop exactly all the incidents which one desires to support the theory.

Let us suppose, for example, that with the aid of history we wish to prove that, in the order of battle, cavalry is better placed behind the infantry than on the wings, or that, unless with a great superiority of force, it is extremely dangerous, as well from the tactical as the strategical point of view (that is to say, as well on the field of battle as when manœuvring in the theatre of war), to divide one's forces into many large columns with the object of carrying out a converging attack.

It would not be sufficient in the former case to mention that some battles were lost when the cavalry was placed in the rear of the infantry, and in the second case to mention the battles of Rivoli and of Wagram, and that of the Austrians in the Italian theatre of war in 1796, as well as that of the French in the German theatre of war in the same year. It is necessary to have recourse to a consecutive explanation of all the general circumstances and all the particular facts in such a fashion as to make evident the effective influence, which, for the defence in the first case and for the offensive in the second case, the formations in question have produced on the result of each of the operations. This manner of procedure would indicate also the rational use which could be made of each of those formations which would complete the

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discussion of the question, as it would be contrary to truth to allege that this form of attack is to be unconditionally rejected under all circumstances.

In point of fact, this form of attack is now, on the whole, popular among modern German and Japanese theorists.

When the detailed explanations of one historical example are not sufficient, we may of course have resort to many to strengthen our case, but this method is very liable to abuse. Hence it happens that, instead of developing a single example in all its details, one prefers to touch upon several, and thus produce the appearance of very strong evidence. But then, in regard to some statements, a dozen examples would prove nothing, because the other side can produce a dozen to prove the contrary. Thus, if some one mentioned a dozen battles to prove that the defeat was due to attack in divided columns, we could at once reply by mentioning a dozen battles in which a similar attack resulted in victory. Let us reflect on various situations to explain how easy it is to make a misleading use of examples.

An illustration by an event which we content ourselves by superficially examining is like an object which we observe so far off that we can only take in its general form, and can distinguish no details or parts. One sees that examples displayed in this fashion can be adduced to support contradictory opinions.

Thus, for instance, some people consider the campaigns of Daun, the Austrian General in the Seven Years' War, as models of prudence and skill, while others hold him up as the type of all that is weak and irresolute of purpose. So with the passage by Napoleon of the Noric Alps in 1797 (after his brilliant Italian campaign), some commend it as a display of wonderful skill and resolution, and others denounce it as pure foolhardiness.

So with the defeat of the French in Russia, 1812. Some blame the excessive energy of Napoleon, others censure his lack of energy. Manifestly both critics cannot have accurately followed the chain of events, for they contradict each other. They cannot have all made themselves masters of their examples or illustrations; they have blundered over their facts, and if one set speaks the truth, the other set must be speaking falsely.

So in regard to our present-day politics, each set of Parliamentarians accuses the other of being "criminal conspirators," "sneaks," and "conspiring conjurers." Surely it is possible that all are equally ignorant of the details of their duties as well as of good manners.

While recognising clearly the difficulty presented by the use of historical illustrations as well as the conditions with which their use must comply in order to be of practical benefit, we are driven to the conclusion that recent wars supply the most useful examples for the bases of theory. Not only was war conducted by different methods in the distant past, but, moreover, a vast variety of little details lose their significance; all very ancient pictures become dark through age, so the history of a war gradually loses its specific force and peculiar character, and the details which survive become unduly prominent, as they are not contrasted with and modified by those which were there originally, but which have been lost. When we consider the present state of the military art, at least from the point of view of armament, it is obvious that the wars since that of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) are the most instructive to modern soldiers. It is quite otherwise in the war of the Spanish Succession (1702-1714). Firearms were not so perfect, cavalry played the principal part, and the military art as such was feeble and weak.

Since Clausewitz wrote this the importance of cavalry has been revived. It played a leading *rôle* in the United States and in South Africa, as in the days of Hannibal or Marlborough; and the war in Manchuria has illustrated the serious consequences of its absence on one side and its incompetent handling on the other. The future is with cavalry.

But, nevertheless, it would not be safe to conclude that it is impossible to utilise the teachings of ancient experience in our time. If we had more detailed information, ancient wars would be very serviceable lessons indeed.

Although we have no precise evidence as to how the Swiss handled their troops against the Burgundians and the French, these battles for the first time set forth the inestimable value of really good infantry as against cavalry. Then, again, the wars of the Condottieri teach us that the character of war depends on the instrument which is employed—for in no other time have the forces used in war possessed so much the characteristics of a

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special instrument, and been so distinct and set apart from the ordinary community which used them.

See Lytton's 'Rienzi: Last of the Tribunes,' for Condottieri; Aguto, or Hawkwood, said to be a London tailor, before he went to the wars in France, was one of the most celebrated. Natives of our isles have been celebrated soldiers of fortune in all ages. But Italian condottieri were the armies of the various republics and little states, 1340-1500. The Free Companies committed terrible excesses in France, 1350-1370. Sforza and other Free Company leaders became petty princes in Italy. Their views of life are not so very badly expressed by Scott's 'David Dalgetty.'

The German Great Company numbered 6000, of whom 1500 were cavalry, armed from head to foot; these soldiers used to fight for days and not a man was killed. The Italian band actually defeated, through superior skill at arms and organisation and tactical ability, the army of the Emperor Rupert of Germany. These bands were very unwilling to proceed to extremities against each other. They might be comrades again any day, and their relations with each other resembled rather those of those "learned friends," hostile K.C.'s, who, though opposed to-day, may be briefed on the same side to-morrow. The military hirelings had not the least community of feeling with their clients, princes or people, and fleeced and persecuted the Italians wholesale, using their swords exactly as lawyers use their tongues, and there were no judges to keep them in order.

The daring offensive counter-stroke which, while Hannibal was attacking herself in Italy, Rome delivered against Carthage during the Second Punic War in Spain and Africa, would be a very interesting and instructive study, as the mutual relations of the states and armies concerned are well known. But the more one wishes to detach and study details of operations as distinguished from general principles, the less valuable are the models and the experience of ancient epochs. At every period writers have been too prone to succumb to the temptation of supporting their theories by an appeal to antiquity.

Yet Lord Bacon says, "What we call antiquity was really the youth of the world."

Are not these writers only proving their own self-conceited pedantry? Such methods of persuasion carry no conviction to our minds, and we believe that they have recourse to these illustrations to conceal their own imperfections and lack of knowledge.

If Clausewitz be right, these writers take a very roundabout way of proving their ignorance. For my part, I venture to think Rocquancourt, Folard, Alison, Napoleon, and Napier, as good teachers as Clausewitz, and just as well informed and far more luminous, and they all held ancient models in the highest esteem. What modern has surpassed in architecture, or painting, or philosophy, or law, or theology, the great masters of antiquity? Surely if this be so in every other department of knowledge except war, the ancients could not have been very great fools in regard to the science or art and science of war. Can any student of modern strategic geography ignore the operations of Alexander or the military roads of the Romans?

It certainly would be most meritorious to establish a theory of war on historical examples as Feuquières has tried to do, but the thing appears impossible when one reflects that the longest life could hardly suffice for the task, and that it would also be necessary to carry to the attempt, from the start, the most certain knowledge of war. If any author essays this enterprise with a clear conviction that he is animated by vital energy, he ought to prepare for his arduous undertaking as for a pilgrimage, and must be ready to sacrifice his strength and his life to the cause. He must not be deterred by any amount of toil, he must not shrink from any sacrifice. According to the formula of the French Code, he must not be afraid of the "great and powerful folk." He must be void of vanity and of false shame. He must make an oath to himself "to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

May I add that with such recommendations or drawbacks, if he be a Briton, he must not hope to succeed in life or to get office under either a Whig or a Tory Administration; he will most assuredly be "boycotted." Fancy any society or party clique tolerating a man who told even one-tenth of the truth! let alone the "whole truth, and nothing but the truth." What would the Committee of Imperial Defence have to say in this case?

#### INFORMATION IN WAR.

The information and the news which can be procured about the enemy, his armed force, his territory, his resources in wealth, and his moral character, are the base of all the plans and the movements of his adversary.

When one considers how unreliable this information must be, and how inconsistent and shifting are all rumours and how every possible means of deception are used, we can easily understand

how unstable is the military scaffolding, and how easy it is for the whole structure to tumble to pieces, and all connected with it.

Authors advise us to be on our guard, and only to trust information which can be actually verified ; but this is paltry advice, one of those routine prudential maxims with which writers who have really no information to give their readers fill their empty treatises. Of all the news which the Generals receive in war, much is very unreliable and much is absolutely false and contradictory. We can only expect an officer to come to the best decision that his knowledge of human nature and of the natural sequence of events and his experience and clear judgment permit him to make on the facts brought to his notice. He must be guided by the law of probabilities.

This difficulty is considerable when the first resolutions of the Cabinet are concerned, and when the General and his staff are still outside the sphere of operations, but it is enhanced enormously when news succeeds news without cessation during the stress of actual warfare.

For a leader of little experience it is a blessing when information and rumours are contradictory and neutralise each other, and call down criticism upon themselves.

But when he has not this good luck, that is to say, when the incoming reports support, enforce and corroborate each other, they begin to take such a hold on his imagination, that they end by bringing about a decision of which he soon perceives the error as well as the falsehood, the lying, and the exaggeration of the reports on which he relied.

Much information in war is false, and human nature is inclined to magnify ill news and to doubt good news ; hence imaginary dangers appear on all sides, and keep on assailing the nerves of the leaders ; they vanish from the imagination one day only to reappear the next.

Hence, in order to inspire confidence in others and to maintain his own equilibrium, *mens æqua in arduis*, the General-in-Chief must be as firm as a rock which resists the tempest and the sky. This rôle is far from easy ; it demands a cool and powerful judgment, otherwise the only plan, if one lacks experience, is to form no personal opinion on the situation, to close the heart against fear, and only to admit hope.



The difficulty in the way of clearness of vision is the cause of much friction in the working of the military machine, and causes the unexpected to occur frequently. The impressions of the senses influence us much more than do ratiocinations, and to such an extent that probably no chief proceeded to execute the best considered designs without some misgivings as to the perfection of his plan. A man who is influenced by others is the more likely to be irresolute in decisive crises, but even when he elaborates his designs alone he may very well doubt their fitness just when he begins to execute them.

This, then, is the very great distinction between the conception and the execution of plans. Therefore, in spite of the most contradictory appearances, be calm and confident, and persevere in your deliberate design; do not modify your plan of action till your range of vision surveys the whole field of action, and the fantastic dangers with which chance and rumours have clouded the scene of war have disappeared.

Napoleon said that he could have devised much better plans of operations for his various campaigns than those which he actually carried out, but that time pressed; he could not go on refining and calculating indefinitely, and therefore he made up a good, well-considered scheme, having secured as much and as clear information as possible, and stuck to it, right or wrong. He admitted that his Jena campaign was marred somewhat by several great errors, but, nevertheless, on the whole was a sound and good scheme; he secured the initiative, did not waver, and won while his opponents were muddling and wasting time in elaborating several plans—all out of time.

Bacon says, "The helmet of Pluto which makes the politic man go invisible is secrecy in counsel and celerity in execution."

If my readers would like to have illustrations of false news on war and the difficulty of preventing surprise or of securing surprise, let him read the rumours circulated by Marlborough in 1703-4 and 1710; the magnificent lying of Napoleon, 1796, 1800, and 1805; the manner in which the French were deceived by Wellington at the beginning of his campaign of 1813; and the consummate stratagems of Jackson, 1862.

The same subject can be studied in Frontinus and Polynæus.

Lord Wolseley also circulated false news very efficiently in 1882.

Bacon wrote a fragment of an Essay on "Fames," by which he meant rumours and reports.

Fame, or rumours, or false information and news, "is of that Force that there is scarcely any great Action wherein it hath not a Part, especially in War. Mucianus undid Vitellius by a Fame that he scattered, that Vitellius had in Purpose to move the Legions of *Syria* into *Germany* and those of *Germany* into *Syria*, whereupon the Legions of *Syria* were infinitely inflamed.



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"Julius Cæsar took Pompey unprovided and laid asleep his industry and preparations by a rumour that Cæsar's soldiers loved him not, and that being weary of the wars and laden with the spoils of Gaul, would desert him when he came into Italy. . . . Themistocles made Xerxes, King of Persia, post apace out of Greece by giving out that the Grecians had a purpose to break his Bridge of Ships, which he had made athwart the Hellespont. . . .

"Wherefore let all wise governors have as great a watch and care over fames as they have of the actions and designs themselves."

## CHAPTER V.

### OF FRICTION IN WAR.

THIS is a very interesting chapter, but the translation is very free and more-over condensed—indeed, a paraphrase rather than a translation.

It is almost impossible for any ordinary man to comprehend wherein consist the incessant difficulties which are ever arising in war, and yet no one can exaggerate the extraordinary degree of unusual ability, and the superior qualities of mind and soul which a General-in-Chief must possess.

Everything appears so simple in military narratives, the necessary knowledge appears to be so limited, the combinations so insignificant, that to a scientific student any ordinary problem of the Higher Mathematics appears more profound. But once a man has been through a war, or has observed the work done in an ordinary manoeuvre, all the difficulties become intelligible, although it is very difficult to account for the change in one's point of view, and to explain the invisible factors which control all the machinery of moving armies.

Though everything seems simple, in war the very simplest things become difficult; the difficulties so accumulate and multiply as compared with the ordinary and stable life of men, as to produce a kind and degree of friction such as must be seen to be appreciated.

An infinite number of petty circumstances occur which one can never foresee, much less provide for by orders in advance.

For example, mud, upset wagons, drunken orderlies, undelivered despatches, a fire in a village, a broken bridge, a blown-up tunnel, a fall from a horse, a swindling contractor, a bolting team, a swampy district, a thick wood, ice, snow, mist, a fog, a flood, a fit of temper, ptomaine poisoning, no water, no food, jealousy, treachery, and a hundred other things, each of which has spoiled some campaign.

Hence a general is always liable to come far short of the end or object which he desired to attain. Under the impulse of a will of iron the machine may surmount all difficulties and break down every obstacle, but it is used up or its efficiency is much diminished in so doing.

In confirmation of this statement any reader need only consult any volume of Wellington's despatches. I quote from Loraine Petre's summary of the work of Napoleon in 1807, a few cases of good and bad luck in regard to despatches. Napoleon's admirable plan against the Russians before the battle of Eylau, 1807, was entirely foiled by the capture of the despatch containing his orders sent by Berthier to Bernadotte on the 31st January. The accident occurred in this wise :—

"This all-important paper was given by Berthier to the first officer who came to hand. A young officer, fresh from one of the military schools, was on his way to join his regiment in Bernadotte's corps. He might as well be utilised to carry the despatch. Naturally he knew nothing of the enemy's positions, nothing of the country he had to cross, and he probably was only able to get a very sorry mount. This unfortunate young man fell in with a party of Cossacks sent forward by Bagration. He was captured before he could destroy the paper, and the inestimable prize reached Bennigsen, the Russian General-in-Chief, on the 1st February, after it had been first read by Bagration."

Another similar incident follows :—

"On the evening of the 6th June, Davout sent a despatch to Ney saying that if the enemy continued his movement he would have 40,000 men on his rear. This was a considerable exaggeration for the benefit of the Russian General Bennigsen. Davout took care to send the despatch by a route on which the bearer was certain to be captured, as he actually was, and Bennigsen was misled accordingly."

Another piece of Prussian good fortune was due to the fact that "on the 11th June, Lestocq intercepted a despatch from Berthier to Victor, directing the latter to attack the Prussians, to seize Mehlsack"—and so forth. Lestocq, of course, at once recognised his danger and took steps accordingly.

An army is used up quicker and needs more repair than any other machine. Its vast resources diminish from 15 to 40 per cent. in three months. The Federal military machine cost £1,000,000,000 of our money in four years.

Our studies of the influence of friction in mechanics only enable us to form a very feeble conception of the difference between real war and war on paper, between the tactics of the battle-field and the tactics of the war game.

The military machine seems simple enough and easy enough to manage. But it is necessary to remember that it subdivides itself into a number of great sections, *e.g.* army corps, divisions,

brigades, battalions, and that the smallest of these is again subdivided into a certain number of individuals.

According to theory, if a battalion be the unit, and its Chief is selected for his competence and energy and he is responsible for the execution of his orders, every battalion should discharge its duties as easily and regularly as a horizontal shaft, which revolves with very little friction on its pivot of steel. But a battalion in war does nothing of the kind, and once it takes the field every flaw in the conception of theorists becomes very palpable. The battalion is composed of hundreds of individuals only linked together by military discipline, of different origin, education, habits of thought, moral sympathies, and tastes, and even military skill and experience—yet a few of them, or even one officer, or driver, or sentry, may upset, or delay, the whole arrangements of a day or a month and cause its ruin.

The dangers of war also, which are terrible and inevitable, and the physical strain of marching and other duties which are also unavoidable, augment the friction to such an extent that they may be called the principal causes of the difficulties. As it is not possible to deal effectively by either computation or concentration or compensation with this force as is done in mechanics, it is always subject to the action of chance, and produces in consequence results which no one could foresee.

We could fill volumes with examples of the apparently paltry accidents which have upset the plans of the best generals.

The following incident took place at Donna Maria in the Pyrenees, July 1813:—

"A few hours gained and the French must surrender or disperse. Wellington gave strict orders to prevent the lighting of fires, the straggling of soldiers, or any other indication of the presence of troops, and he placed himself among the rocks on a commanding point from whence he could observe every movement of the enemy. Soult seemed tranquil, and four of his *gens d'armes* were seen to ride up the valley in a careless manner. Some of the staff proposed to cut them off; the English general, anxious to hide his own presence, forbade this, *but the next moment* three marauding English soldiers entered the valley and were instantly carried off by the *gens d'armes*; half an hour afterwards the French drums beat to arms and their columns began to move out of San Estevan towards Sumbilla. Thus the disobedience of three plundering knaves unworthy of the name of soldiers, deprived one consummate commander of the most splendid success and saved another from the most terrible disaster."\*

\* 'Napier,' vol. v. p. 243.

In fine, provisions and material and strength which would be abundant almost to extravagance in ordinary life, barely reach the line of mediocrity in war. To make war is to work in an environment bristling with difficulties, dangers, uncertainties, physical and moral obstacles.

There are two or three examples in Sir J. Moore's Campaign of the influence which purely accidental circumstances have in war. The interception of the French despatch, which arose, by the way, merely in consequence of the officer who carried it having quarrelled with the postmaster of a village about post horses, and been killed in a brawl . . . the flooding of the Elsa . . . the news from Austria arriving just in time to turn Napoleon back from Astorga . . . all these matters bore most importantly upon the final result of the operations. Such is the influence of fortune or luck of this kind that Sulla called himself not Magnus but Felix.

The fact that ordinary letters instead of cyphers were used was most injurious to Hannibal, and to Napoleon in 1814.

The anxiety and disappointment, which in the Campaign of 1809 the want of food and transport caused to Sir Arthur Wellesley, show the vital importance of these matters, even more strongly than did the delays and the long drawn out columns in that of Sir John Moore. By advancing into Spain without having prepared any magazines, Sir Arthur was at the mercy of his allies; and as he was unable in a friendly country to take food by force, and could not get it by other means, he was compelled to abandon Spain and retire into Portugal. His army, though they fought bravely in a half-fed state at Talavera, at length fell into a very bad state. He himself, writing shortly after that battle, says: "The soldiers lose their discipline and their spirit; they plunder even in the presence of their officers. The officers are almost as bad as the men, and with an army which a fortnight ago beat double their numbers, I should now hesitate to meet a French corps of half their strength." But Wellington learned not to trust to Spanish supplies for the future, and his future supply arrangements were masterpieces.

"No regiment is capable of marching immediately on the enemy from its quarters. First of all, those that have been dismissed must be summoned to the colours, each to his own particular sphere of action. Hundreds, thousands—perhaps millions—of men will be suddenly torn from their firesides and set hastily in movement; and this latter must be most precisely determined beforehand if a serious confusion is not to arise. The most difficult is not the mobilisation of the line regiments; here, on the contrary, everything works easily in comparison; but numerous and special departments must be newly formed. The first reserve, the garrison, and the reinforcements, *ober-Kommandos*, the inspections of the lines of communication, and the *Kommandanturen*, most of them with special staffs, composed of various branches, are only formed on the day of mobilisation. All the columns and trains must be filled and equipped with horses; and the parks of transport newly organised. *Intendanturen*; the commissariat, field-bakeries, and post-offices, the telegraph

staff; the paymaster's, the legal and sanitary, and the chaplain's departments, must also be formed."—*Goltz*.

"Commissions of all kinds are formed. Men have to be clothed and armed, officers and officials furnished with horses, depôts formed, supplies collected and brought together. Fortresses threatened by the enemy must be put into a state of defence, and equipped with military garrisons, officials and organisations of all kinds. The business of peace requires to be brought to a conclusion, or to be assigned to representative officers; the archives and registration departments must be made secure for the period the war shall last. The bureaux for the active army must be arranged and properly fitted out. Men, horses, and material of war must be forwarded upon the railway to the place where they are required. The transports to the frontier soon afterwards begin. All this must take place in the course of a few days. In the year 1870, mobilisation was ordered on the night of the 16th July; and on the 4th August the frontier had been passed and the first victory won. Nowadays we wish to be quicker still."—"The Nation in Arms," by Baron Von der Goltz, pp. 146-147.

#### THE FOOD SUPPLY DIFFICULTY.

A few facts will make the enormous difficulty of feeding an army apparent. One army corps would consume all the provisions in nine miles of fertile country multiplied by five in one day. The Prussian army in France contained fifteen and a half corps. Marlborough's army at Blenheim would have stretched on one road twenty-one miles. Napoleon's army in Belgium, before the battle of Waterloo, would have stretched forty-nine miles on one road, and the present German army, if fully mobilised, would stretch 650 miles. Our army in South Africa was nearly four times as numerous as that of Napoleon in 1815.

Once a large army ceases to move and becomes sedentary at a siege, or before or after a battle, it must be supplied from behind, either by railways or canals, or arms of the sea and rivers, and by many and good roads, or by all these together. A place of average productiveness can feed for twenty-four hours only a number of troops exceeding its own population six times, besides a number of horses equal to one quarter of the number of the soldiers. In practice it is possible for a village of 1,000 inhabitants to feed 6,000 men for a day and night only. They must then get food elsewhere or be hungry.

On the average about 10,360 tons per mile are required for an army of 100,000 men moving about sixty-seven miles from its base.—*Löbell*.

"Thirty-six million pounds of preserved meat, thirty-six million pounds of biscuits, six and a half million pounds of sugar, four million pounds of jam, twelve hundred thousand pounds of coffee, two and a half million pounds of compressed vegetables, six hundred thousand pounds of tea, and twelve hundred thousand pounds of salt. They are a few, only a few, of the items of a year's food bill for the army in South Africa, and every ounce of these thousands of tons had to be carried seven thousand miles."

All wars have their own individual character, and during their course each presents a number of peculiarities and phenomena, and



the arena may be likened to a sea as yet quite unknown to the General-in-Chief, and dotted over with rocks which his intelligence could have suspected, it is true, but which he never saw and of which he has no indications on his chart and amidst which he must navigate in profound darkness. Suppose the wind is contrary, or, in other words, that events declare against him, then let one imagine what ability, presence of mind, and enormous energy are required for making the general management a success, although seen from a distance everything seems to go smoothly and almost of its own accord. Coping with such difficulties—how to overcome the friction; this is the principal form of skill which is required from a Commander-in-Chief, and its possession undoubtedly conduces in a high degree to his glory. But certainly the best general is not he who exaggerates difficulties and who feels them most acutely—is not the man whom long experience of difficulties has rendered over-cautious; the best leader is he who, while carefully appreciating the friction of war, sees not only the difficulties but also, either by experience or study, knows how to surmount them, and does not expect precise results from his plans which inevitable difficulties may prevent him from attaining.

Theoretically, it is quite impossible to determine with exactitude the amount of difficulty which may thwart his plans. A general will also require what is called "tact." This is always more necessary amidst the crowd of everyday circumstances and multitudes of details which accumulate and become confusing, than in great crises as to which one gets time to reflect and take counsel.

Marlborough and Wellington were distinguished for tact, and Lord Roberts had the same quality in dealing with our Indian as well as European soldiers. Cases in which Napoleon rose to great heights were amidst the dangerous times after Eylau, after Essling, after Bautzen, and after La Rothière, when he was overwhelmed with every kind of accumulation of difficulties and obstacles.

Even as by the mere fact of his training and culture, a well-brought-up and educated man speaks, writes, and moves with ease and politeness, wherever he may be; so the education and training which a distinguished soldier has received, enable him to be at home alike in the great and in the petty conditions of war, and in all the oscillations and caprices of a campaign. He can judge with skill and tact what each situation demands, and how every vicissitude is to be used for his ends.

Of Napoleon's work at Osterode, 1807, Savary says, "If the Emperor



instead of sitting in a hole like Osterode, had gone to a large place, he would have taken three months to do all he actually did in one."

He had to deal with troubles at home and with matters of diplomacy all over Europe and Persia and many other great questions. Yet he found time to watch every detail concerning his army, its communications and supplies. Nothing seemed to escape him. It was he who called attention to an omission from a return of two regiments which had been overlooked at Luxembourg; it was he who, by comparing hospital with regimental returns, discovered how many of his men were marauding all over the country. His correspondence teems with complaints of insufficient information from his generals, with orders for the establishment of batteries, for forwarding supplies of all sorts, for the establishment of hospitals and the removal of the wounded, with demands for more shoes, and with instructions for reconnaissances and surveys. There is hardly a point on which he insists more strongly than the provision of ample supplies of shoes.

The lack of good boots is one of the most disagreeable causes of friction in war, and we read frequent complaints on this head in many a campaign; in the Crimea a cargo of boots for only one foot arrived! Jackson's men were often only half shod. So with horse shoes, a British Cavalry force in Spain was supplied with horse shoes for the left feet only, and no forges were available!

## CHAPTER VI.

### ON CRITICISM IN WAR.

CLAUSEWITZ'S essay on criticism with regard to war is very voluminous, we have not space for it all, and hence our readers will please accept this as a free *précis* rather than an exact translation. Parts are almost unintelligible to Germans, and seem to justify to some extent the low esteem in which our great authority is held by Camon and other modern critics.

If the object of a writer on any art should be to make his language convey his thoughts to the reader so that "a wayfaring man though a fool" can comprehend his ideas, Clausewitz seems better adapted for the *rôle* of a diplomatist like Talleyrand, who uses language to conceal his thoughts, than for that of a teacher of war.

The influence of theory on practical life is manifested rather by way of criticism than of instruction. Criticism applies fundamental and abstract truths to real transactions, and by their frequent use and their constant repetition brings them within the range of ordinary intelligences. Criticism comes nearer to theory than does instruction. In a simple narrative of a historical event, the instructor confines himself to placing events side by side, and at most merely indicating the immediate relations between each other of the causes which brought them about.

But in a critical discussion of events the intelligence of the student must accomplish three distinct operations.

(1) It seeks for and fixes doubtful cases. This is the method of historical research which has little or nothing in common with theory.

(2) It traces effects to their causes. This is critical research which bases itself on those parts of any theory which are indicated, settled, or confirmed by experience.

(3) It appreciates exactly the means taken to secure any end. This is criticism properly so called, and as the phrase is generally

understood. It apportions praise or blame to the skilful or unskilful use of means. In this manner theory assists history and settles the amount of instruction which can be derived from the observation of any facts.

The really critical part of historical inquiries consists of parts two and three as above, and in regard thereto it is of first importance to pursue our researches to the very ultimate elements—that is to say, to verities about which there cannot be any difference of opinion. We must not, as is the case with so many modern superficial writers, or mere scribblers for hire or faction, stop half-way and take things for granted, or re-echo mere party cries, and make affirmations as baseless as they are prejudiced. We must not adhere to fancies or supposititious cases!

It may be pointed out here that this form of criticism was common in regard to the wars of 1899 and 1900, and again in 1904-5, and not one of the inductions or deductions of the majority of our critics was based on either wisdom or knowledge. The criticisms on Kuropatkin were beneath contempt, and the orgies of folly in 1899 and 1901 were mere Mafficking hysteria, as we pointed out at the time in the UNITED SERVICE MAGAZINE.

It is very hard to deduce effects from causes if one happens to know nothing about the causes of the actions under criticism. But in none of the whole range of the objects of criticism does this occur more frequently than in war. Very few critics can know the whole truth; they cannot know the motives of the generals, they cannot know the more subtle machinery influencing political or strategic designs.

The accidental or transitory causes of the actions of statesmen and heroes are obscured, or lost, or deliberately misrepresented by themselves. The actors in great events are often men of profound dissimulation—there are many "faults," gaps, *lacunæ* in historical narratives which may easily mislead the most judicious critic; and lastly, criticism is often waste of time, all refuted and ridiculed by later authorities.

The publication of secret missions often upset long-established explanation of events. The directors of military operations are "hard liars" as part of their business, and become makers and masters of falsehood.

A critic can only be expected to pursue his researches up to the

gaps and "faults." He then should frankly confess his ignorance of what he does not know, even at the risk of losing his reputation for infallibility.

A critic should never pretend that the causes known to him are the only possible explanations of the events which he is discussing. Let him not try to explain the unknown.

This is a logical method, and has only the necessary inconvenience that one can only say that he has made as good an explanation as he can, based on all the knowledge at his disposal. He need not pretend to explain or discuss the situation in its totality. In other words, he need not pose as an oracle as well as a critic.

Critical research as to war is confronted by another very serious obstacle. In this case effects are seldom the result of any one cause—but result from several distinct and yet united causes. Hence it is not enough to follow up the course of events to their origin, we must also consider a variety of subsidiary and also simultaneous causes. Hence our studies must be more far reaching than in regard to any other branch of criticism, scientific or literary, or even sociological. Therefore criticism must intrude into, if not become part of, the realm of theory.

In war, criticism not only examines into the means employed, and attempts to appreciate their value and their use, it also must inquire if the effects are those which the responsible authorities desired. Frequently success is the last thing which they expected, and victory surprised them more than the enemy. But these inquiries are directly connected with theory.

We have already said that in military criticism it is of first importance to pursue the inquiries as far as the ascertaining of absolutely irrefragable truth, and not to stop at arbitrary suppositions. These are soon upset by contradictory assertions, and lead to prolonged and wearisome discussions without either profit or instruction.

Like the Wolseley-Hamley controversy, and the recent Kitchener controversy in India, and the dispute as to who won the battles of Eylau and Toulouse.

But we must admit that the search after the true causes of events and careful consideration of the means of success and their best use lead us up to theory again—that is to say, back from truth in particulars to truth in generalities.

When criticism in its researches reaches the sphere of theory—especially practical theory or the theory of practice—the critic should be content, and should stop his investigations; but otherwise he should pursue truth as far as the primordial elements of things.

Clausewitz has no mercy on readers, but lest writers should be engaged in the labours of Sisyphus they must make some limit to their investigations and know when to stop!

“ With many a weary step and many a groan,  
Up a high hill he heaved a huge round stone;  
The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,  
Thundered impetuous down and rolled along the ground.”

Too many writers, after stating a fact in their text, waste columns on an appendix, explaining away their own facts and miscalculations, and apologising for daring to express an opinion.

The reader is disgusted if his author indulges in endless ramifications, petty apologetics and mazy statistics, and long-drawn appreciations and mystic soul-searchings.

Therefore some practical and well-considered theory is absolutely indispensable for efficient criticism; without such support no critic can produce really instructive, convincing, and unanswerable demonstrations—like propositions of Euclid, which are based on the preliminary adoption of sound axioms and hypotheses.

It were a mere dream to believe in the possibility of constructing any theory which would suit all needs, and include all abstract truth without any exception, and forbid or exclude criticism from venturing outside its range, and would limit the functions of research to the discovery merely of which of its rules would suit a particular case.

The spirit of analysis which presides over the construction of theory ought so to guide the labours of criticism that it not only can, but often does, ignore the consecrated bounds of theory, and carries its investigations into new fields. If criticism keeps to the rules of theory in too servile a fashion, it may well be that its end may be forgotten and its essentials lost.

The more a theory takes the shape of a positive doctrinal dogma, the more its methods, its rules, and precepts depart from the character and fall below the standard of absolute truth, and of that universality which distinguishes true theory from mere instruction in practical details.

Theory points out the means which should be employed, but in every case the judgment must decide whether a particular method should be used or not.

Criticism ought not to consider the teachings or suggestions of theory as obligatory formulæ, but as guides and indications of the best method of procedure in any given case.

Suppose tactics prescribe the place of cavalry as behind the infantry, and not on the flanks in the order of battle—would it not be merely pedantic to condemn a general off-hand for this reason only without allowing any modification of that arrangement?

The critic should carefully consider the reasons why a general in a particular instance ignored the rules of war, and, if the reasons appear unsatisfactory, he then may censure and appeal to the rules.

So, though it is theoretically recognised that in dividing forces before an attack a general diminishes the probability of success, it would be as unreasonable to condemn him in a particular case without thoroughly understanding the circumstances as it would be to condemn the rule, because in some cases generals have succeeded in spite of division of forces. The theory may be sound as a rule, yet the neglect of the theory may have been wise in the given case.

The double duty of finding out the effect which a cause has produced, and of discovering whether the means employed have corresponded with the end which was desired, presents little difficulty to the critic, provided that the distance which separates the effect from the cause and the means from the end be not considerable.

When an army allows itself to be surprised in such a fashion that it is paralysed and absolutely unable to make any good use of its plans and resources, the effect of the surprise cannot be a matter for discussion.

*E.g.* Melas at Marengo, Pope at Second Bull Run, and Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir.

Theory having established the axiom that on the field of battle an enveloping attack is the most conclusive, but the most uncertain, every time we have to examine and discuss an operation of that nature we must first inquire what was the object which the general, who had recourse to this manœuvre, desired to attain.



For example, Napoleon before Eylau, Wellington before Vittoria, the Prussians before Königsberg, and the Japanese before Mukden.

In point of fact, if he adopted this course because of the magnitude of the advantages which would result from the operation, he deserves credit; whereas if he was influenced, except in very exceptional circumstances, by the idea that he would more probably succeed than by any other method of attack, he quite misunderstood the nature of his strategy and committed a fault.

In regard to war, critics must remember that they are not done with the merits or defects of any detail of any scheme when they have discussed its effect in any given phase of a campaign. An initial error, a defective scheme, and bungling administration affect the whole war from start to finish.

The consequences of the misconceptions and folly of the direction and of the politicians were felt throughout the whole campaign of the Crimea, and of 1861-65, and of 1870-71, and of 1899-1902. A critic must keep these deplorable blunders before his eyes throughout.

In war, as in other branches of human energy, every part of the complete development of the human efforts employed, every intellectual operation which bears practical fruit, all the parts of the whole are so closely connected with each other that there is no cause, however small, which does not produce effect continuously up to the close of the war and does not modify in some degree the final result. There is no means, small or great, of which the force is not felt till all is over.

A critic is justified, therefore, in following the effects of a cause as long as the phenomena which it produces appear worthy of interest.

In a great number of cases, especially if decisive dispositions are being considered, it is necessary to follow the inquiry till the last act of the drama—that is to say, to the efforts which directly result in the close of the war by peace.

The consequences of the manner in which McClellan, in the midst of the difficulties of the autumn and winter of 1861-62, had organised the "Army of the Potomac," were felt more than two years after he was finally superseded by an ungrateful and foolish Government. The value of Wellington's plans for the defence of Portugal was demonstrated as fully in the end of 1812 as in the middle of 1810. Volume V. of the '*Times History*' proves that the consequences of our Government's ignorance in 1899 of the value of cavalry were felt acutely as late as 1901.



Efficient inquiry into the fashion in which causes are so closely connected from one end to another of the drama of war, presents very serious difficulties.

In fact, the more important is any event the more numerous are the forces and the details of the circumstances which affect its issue. The more any cause is separated from the result which it produces, the greater is the number also of incidental and obscure causes which must be observed and considered, and which must be taken into account if we are to understand the final result.

It is certain, for example, that when we have ascertained the causes of the loss of a battle, we have already discovered part of the causes of the consequences which that important event must bring about for the whole war or campaign ; but part only, because in the sequence of events which follow the battle itself, the study of the effects will also necessarily reveal other causes which must equally contribute to the final peace.

In proportion as the range of vision is enlarged—the same diversity of objects reveals itself in the examination of means—because the more distant the object desired, the greater the number of instruments and aids to which it is necessary to have recourse.

Thus inasmuch as the opposed armies have simultaneously aimed at the same object, in discussing the methods adopted for the attainment of that object we must of necessity discuss everything which each army ought to have done or might have done as well as what it actually did.

The vast range of observation and the multiplicity of consideration and alternative courses in which a critic may easily become involved, are more easily imagined than described.

If any writer undertakes to give the public an accurate analysis and sound criticism of any great campaign, he will soon discover that he has undertaken a very serious enterprise.

To compose useful military history requires encyclopædic knowledge, untiring industry, clearness of mental vision, and absolute impartiality. To become an expert in military history is a matter of constant toil for at least twenty years. And to be able to give instructive lectures to any class of audience, demands also the constant aid of an enormous and very costly library. The "one-war" man is a tiresome and useless encumbrance.

Let us take an example to illustrate the difficulties of criticism.

When Bonaparte, at the head of the Army of Italy in 1797, advanced from the Tagliamento against the Austrians, his intention was to force the Archduke Charles to a decisive action before the arrival of reinforcements from the Rhine.

If we only consider the immediate result, the means were well chosen, and the event proved this because, not feeling strong enough for battle, the Archduke only made a pretence of resistance on the river and, recognising the superior forces and energy of character of his adversary, abandoned the theatre of operations and gave up the defence of the passes of the Noric Alps.

But the only advantage which Bonaparte had proposed to gain from his manœuvres was to get rapidly into the heart of the Austrian monarchy, so as to facilitate the movements of the two Armies of the Rhine under Moreau and Hoche and to link his Army of Italy with the forces of these generals.

This was Bonaparte's point of view, and if the critic limits himself to this point of view he will justify the young hero. But if he takes a broader range and considers the whole scheme of Carnot and the French Directory, who saw clearly that the operations from the Rhine could not become effective for six weeks later, he will condemn the passage of the Noric Alps by Bonaparte as an act of desperate and unjustifiable rashness.

Suppose the Austrians had made good use of the respite of six weeks, and had drawn large reserves from their Rhine Army to enable the Archduke Charles to fall upon the Army of Italy—not only would it have been defeated, but put out of action for the whole campaign. In point of fact, it was his recognition of this danger, when he reached Villach, that induced Bonaparte to agree to the armistice of Leoben.

But let us suppose that the critic is on a still loftier pedestal of knowledge and knows some material facts of which Bonaparte was ignorant. He will recognise the strategic potentialities of the fact that there were no reserves between the Archduke and Vienna, and that even in Styria the Archduke could not oppose his superior forces. Bonaparte's march would even then have been useless unless the Austrians attached great value to the security of their capital, which, nevertheless, they abandoned in 1805 and in 1809. The critic must now ask—as all was problematical or

unknown to Bonaparte—what would have been the value of his march if the Austrians, leaving Vienna to its fate, had retired beyond that city into the vast territories still remaining to their monarchy—into Bohemia, or Moravia in Hungary? Even then we cannot solve the problem without discussing the fate of the armies of the Rhine. Even granting that the French succeeded in that direction, owing to superior force, it is quite clear that all their armies put together could never crush out all the Austrian resistance, and that even if they could crush the enemy in the field, their very victory, followed by the occupation of such an enormous territory, would be ruinous. Their strategic position would have been serious to a degree and Bonaparte's army would have been compromised. Manifestly, all these considerations soon began to impress Bonaparte himself, or he would never have granted such easy conditions to the Austrians at the peace of Campo Formio.

The Austrians would not have accepted these terms if they had not been temporarily depressed by the loss of battles and wonderfully impressed by the personality of Bonaparte himself. Critics must remember that war does not deal with mineral or vegetable matter, or with inert nature—but with living, fighting, desperate men; the critic must understand human nature *au fond*. He must never lose sight of the fact that a heroic man, or any man of genius, is a tremendous power in himself. Bonaparte, when negotiating with the Austrians, relied on the prestige accompanied by horror which resulted from his marvellous strategy and his unexampled hardihood.

His self-confidence and fortune ultimately led him to Moscow, where they deserted him. But in 1812 the terror which he inspired had been almost worked out in the tremendous struggles of the preceding years, while in 1797 it was a new experience for mankind. At that date nations had not been taught the value of resistance, *à outrance*, and the extreme difficulty of vanquishing a nation which fights to the bitter end in every part of an extensive territory. Even so in 1797, Bonaparte's land operations from the Tagliamento to Villach would have been almost fruitless if his genius, which promptly appreciated the difficulties in which he might soon become involved, had not induced him to be content with such very moderate terms at Campo Formio.

These observations of Clausewitz make it clear to me that I was right in trying to persuade students to start their strategic studies by reading carefully some general work on strategy and criticism on the art of war, such as Tovey, Vial, or Goltz, or all three, and then taking up a particular campaign and testing the efficiency of the operations on each side by the theory thus learned—just as a sound student of law first learns general principles of jurisprudence, in the *jus gentium* and in his own municipal laws, then studies precedents, and then applies his knowledge to cases in chambers.

The campaign just considered in the merest outline serves to prove how extended is the range, how multitudinous the relations and the difficulties which are presented to critical research when it is pushed to its last limits, which must be the case when it extends to the consideration of capital and decisive movements.

It is also obvious that natural talent is just as necessary for a critic as is theoretical knowledge ; indeed, when there is a lengthened chain of events, causes, and effects, no small ability is displayed in picking out among many influences those which have exercised the most powerful influence on the course of the war.

Again, natural talent is necessary from another point of view.

Critical examination consists not only in the clear comprehension of the methods which have been actually employed in a given campaign, but also in the search for, and discovery of, all those resources and plans which could have been employed. A critic is only justified in censuring the operations of a general and condemning his methods when he can set forth some other and better methods. Genius does not consist, as some pretend, in referring everything to a small number of practical and simple combinations.

It is ridiculous, as is sometimes seen in critical works (*e.g.* so many appreciations of Stonewall Jackson), to be lost in wonder at the adoption of the old and obvious device of a turning movement, for which even savages should be prepared. It is as simple a plan as any of the hundreds of ambuscades and other devices described by Polyænus and Frontinus ; but we recognise, nevertheless, in the value given to turning movements some of the spontaneity of genius, which is necessary for true criticism and which determines its essential value.

In his early campaigns in Italy in 1796 the supposed demoniacal ability of Bonaparte consisted in the application of the very simplest manœuvres repeated again and again from the Riviera to the Adige—and each application of the turning movement and of the use of interior lines, though simplicity itself, surprised and puzzled

each of the many Austrian commanders from Beaulieu to Wurmser and Alvinzi.

For example, the 3rd July, 1796, when Bonaparte resolved to abandon the siege of Mantua and to employ successively all his forces united against each of the isolated columns which Wurmser sent to raise the siege—that plan was everywhere regarded as a display of genius which would probably result in brilliant victories—and so it was; the victories followed in dazzling succession, and they were repeated with more *éclat* on exactly the same principles against each new Austrian Army, whether it came from the Tyrol or the Noric and the Julian Alps.

Criticism promptly appreciated the splendour of these combinations, and the admiration of mankind immediately placed the young commander among the princes and the prophets of strategy.

But yet Clausewitz can see that in this case also the art of the contemporaneous critics and writers like Alison and Thiers and Jomini was at fault. He points out several considerations which, if carefully weighed, would diminish the enthusiasm of hero worshippers.

He points out that the resolution of Bonaparte, as he could neither save the siege equipage nor procure another in its place, involved the formal renunciation of the siege of Mantua, and thus this fortress, which would soon have surrendered if the siege had not been turned into a simple blockade, was able to resist for six months in spite of all Bonaparte's victories in the open country!

A study of recent criticisms on the Manchurian campaigns reveals the fact that the hero worship of the Japanese leadership was based on far flimsier bases, and that in point of fact there was very little genius displayed by any of their commanders. Skill, patience, industry, minute attention to detail were present in abundance, but nothing to be compared to the genius and energy of Marlborough or Frederick, or even Wellington or Lee. Had Napoleon commanded the Russians their adversaries would have been driven back to the sea in confusion. In fact, no small portion of the criticism on the Manchurian War was based on prejudice and dislike of Russians, and another great part was mere hysterical adulation of success which could not but disgust the Japanese themselves.

Critics have held that the raising of the siege of Mantua was inevitable, but our authority makes a very able suggestion of no small value to the many critics who are now discussing the *rôle* of fortresses in war.

The resistance, as against relieving armies of an investing army placed on

lines of circumvallation, had fallen so much into discredit at the close of the last century that, though this system had been frequently adopted with success under Louis XIV., no critic seems to have thought of it in connection with Mantua.

But a careful examination of the situation would have proved that 40,000 of the best soldiers in the world, whom Bonaparte could have placed in lines of circumvallation, strongly entrenched, around Mantua, would have had nothing to fear from the 50,000 Austrians that Wurmser led to the succour of that city. And, indeed, these would not have risked an attack under the circumstances. Surely, though we cannot devote space to demonstrating this fact, at any rate it is worthy of some consideration at the hands of elaborate critical research. We cannot find a trace of this alternative plan either in Bonaparte's own criticism or in the numerous commentaries on his campaign. Yet this plan, or some modification thereof, seems at least as good as that which he adopted, and which earned for him the admiration of mankind.



## CHAPTER VII.

### NATIONAL RISINGS.

I AM quite ready to admit that the admirable work of Von der Goltz on this subject is of more general interest and more up to date than is this chapter by our author. In his time the full development of the principle of a "Nation in Arms" had not taken place. The French conscripts 1792-1815 and the Prussian system up to 1866 were not what Von der Goltz calls a "Nation in Arms." But Clausewitz had observed the operations of the Prussian Volunteers under the Scharnhorst system, which enabled the victims of Jena in 1806 to be at the gates of Paris in 1814. He had witnessed the risings of the Spanish and the Russians and the value of the "Insurrection or National Rising of Hungary"—but Universal Obligatory Military Service had not superseded conscription.

In England, however, in his time under the Militia Acts, the Military Service Act and the Additional Force Bill there was ballot for the Militia, Universal Obligatory Service for the "Volunteers" and a kind of conscription of the worst and poorest classes for the Regular Army.

But, of course, Clausewitz is the more impartial and useful historic guide. When he wrote he could have had no prejudice whatever; whereas Goltz certainly has been a military organiser himself, and devoted to universal military service heart and soul with no qualifications whatever. The republication, therefore, of this chapter at this juncture may be opportune as the speeches of our Secretary of State for War are all delivered with the object of creating a new Nation in Arms of a new species based on enthusiasm without obligatory service, and on enthusiasm of such a powerful and all-transforming nature that it is supposed to make a man who begins to study the art of war when war commences able to defeat in battle a man of equal ability and physical strength who has been working at the art of war for years before its commencement,

I can find, however, no authority for this "presumption" of war, to use a legal phrase, or for this *paulo post future* organisation outside the reports of Mr. Haldane's speeches. The revival of the County military machinery, which has been out of date for 300 years and never was much use, is not supported by the example of any nation in all history. I am not arguing for or against the scheme, but I do not find that Rhetoric or Cant ever organised success, political or military. The orations of Demosthenes are admirable, and, very different from modern political sophistry, they are also immortal; but they did



not protect southern Greece against Philip of Macedon and his godlike son, nor did the wisdom and eloquence of the Amphictyonic League, or Achaean League, or Stoic or Epicurian philosophy prevent the Macedonian phalanx and the Roman Legions and Gothic hordes from superseding the splendour of the cities of Hellas by ruin bare.

All other Virtues and accomplishments in a State are but mere Vanity without a race of fighting men. See Bacon, Essay 29.

Clausewitz says :—

The nineteenth century has produced the phenomenon hitherto unknown to European civilisation of risings of people at large. This measure has partisans ; it has also resolute opponents. Let us consider the latter first. They are of two classes, and in other respects, also are radically opposed. The former only consider the political side of the question and regard the organisation of the whole manhood of the nation as legalising anarchy. In their minds to arm the masses is to arm revolution, and to create a power which must menace the existing order of things.

There cannot be the least doubt, in fact I was assured by themselves that Trade Unions and Socialists are not anxious that the young men of their families should crowd to Haldane's standard, and would prefer universal obligatory service. Whether this idea be right or wrong is not in discussion ; but that it prevails now largely is a fact that cannot be ignored, and I know that the state of affairs in the Belfast strike has given much force to this movement. The reason is that reservists trained in arms might be used for a propaganda by force if need arises, or to resist force.

According to these critics to arm the people is to arm revolution, and to create a force, which may be more dangerous to interior order than valuable for exterior combats. (For example the armed population of Paris, 1871.) The other class of critics look at the question merely from the point of view of the Art of War, and declare that as a military machine the value of a Nation in Arms is not worth its cost.

Mr. Arnold Forster went to some pains to prove by elaborate calculations that the cost of obligatory service in England would be out of all proportion to its benefits, and got himself involved thereby in no small controversy with the National Service League and with military as well as civilian authorities.

Clausewitz refuses to discuss the social and political side of the question.

We are only concerned with this subject in so far as it relates to our operations against a foreign foe. But from this point of view we must reflect that the organisation of national forces is the

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necessary consequence of the ever-growing extension and intensity which wars have developed in this nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century these conditions are still more pronounced : Mukden was to Gravelotte as the latter was to Waterloo.

Yet it is only within a few generations that wars have commenced to expand beyond the limit which has restrained their development for so long. This perpetual increase in the development of war, by reason of the enormous number of combatants in modern war brought about first ballot or conscription, then general obligatory service and the employment of a Landwehr, and has led even to the use of a veteran Landsturm.

Yet in the time when Clausewitz wrote there had been no battles of Gravelotte, Königgratz and Mukden, though Leipsic had been within his experience, and he was at Wavre under Theileman.

But of course when one nation adopted the system of conscription, and had in consequence a very large army, other nations were almost obliged to follow its example. Manifestly, if one army gained excellent results from any new system of recruiting, other armies would adopt that system. Manifestly, also, any power which was the first to utilise this new system of military expansion would have for a time a decisive advantage over others. If this be so we leave to philosophers the decision of the question, "Is universal service conducive to the welfare of the community?" They can also discuss whether war be an evil or a good to humanity. Much learned powder has been spent in these encounters.

Hobbes proves that war is as natural as breathing, and Bacon says that it is like the "heat of exercise" and most beneficial to humanity. Burke demonstrated its service to England. Körner and Meagher have sung songs of the sword. Our philosophical humanitarians prefer the slanderous warfare of partisan speeches or to go to Hague conventions to have their airy nothingness pricked and burst like the Orgoglio of Spenser by the weapons of Prince Arthur.

We go on with our studies utterly indifferent to such scholastic and metaphysical subtleties. Clausewitz was right ; since he wrote Prussia has been involved in at least six wars, two of the very first magnitude. Besides if Europe disarmed and Asia armed—what then? No Hague Convention can put back the clock of time.

As to the defensive, it would be obviously absurd to pretend that an invaded country could by any other expedient utilise its resources effectively. From every point of view the participation

of the population at large in the defence is desirable, especially as obligatory service is in this case valuable from the moral point of view. We have then not to inquire what the armed resistance of the whole people to an invasion happens to cost. We must inquire what influence this resistance may have on the course of the struggle. What are its military conditions and what is the best use to make of its resources? It is perfectly clear that a resistance thus widely disseminated is absolutely incompatible with long continued operations and strong concentrations.

Clausewitz was thinking of the Spanish insurrection against Napoleon and the resistance of Russia in 1812. In the case of 1870-1 a perfectly trained prepared armed nation fought against unprepared regulars followed by an improvised *levée en masse*. Gambetta's improvised army was knocked to pieces by a well-organised and drilled "Nation in Arms."

Obeing a law similar to that which regulates the phenomenon of evaporation the insurrection takes effect by reason of its superficial expansion. The more territory the invaders occupy, the more points of contact between them and the popular resistance, and the more extensive and exhausting the action of the defenders. Like slow combustion it gradually exhausts and wears away the very foundations on which the invaders' force depends. It destroys the very element on which it works. Its work is done by imperceptible degrees, perchance on some points the tension is diminished for a while; on other points vigorous operations may stamp it out, but on the whole when the flames of a general rising extend over all the land, it will have a resistless influence. The invader must abandon the country or it will become his grave. But such a crisis is impossible in a small country, that can be crushed by a prompt and powerful operation of the invader.

The late Mr. Parnell said a guerilla warfare would have no chance in Ireland as there was no room to run away. Belgium or Holland would have no chance in such an event against France or Germany. The British Isles could be overrun now in a few weeks, but when they were covered with forests and Roman works it took the Anglo-Saxons some hundreds of years to drive the Britons back to the western and northern hills. The South African theatre was another matter, as great an area as from Brest to Vienna. Spain has been admirably adapted for guerilla operations and for protracted wars since the days of Augustus Cæsar.

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In reality, the case which we are supposing seldom arises, except when a country has territorial dimensions such as Russia alone possesses in Europe. But wherever there is any extraordinary disproportion between the topography of the invaded country and the force of the invading army a *levée en masse* will be most valuable.

I may say that Clausewitz negotiated the defection of the Prussian Army under York during Napoleon's retreat from Russia.

If then, we do not wish to pursue a phantom in discussing such an armed nation,

(as Mr. Haldane proposes—as compared with a regular army or a perfectly organised and drilled nation at arms)

it is necessary to consider the employment of insurgent or popular levies in conjunction with a permanent regular army and a general plan of military operations based on the combined action of these two instruments.

This was the problem presented by the combination of British and natives in the Spanish Peninsula, 1808-1813. But in France, 1870, when Gambetta began his operations, practically all the French regular soldiers were prisoners to Germany or invested in fortresses, hence Gambetta's levies were promptly and thoroughly defeated at every point of the compass from Amiens to Rouen, Rouen to Le Mans, thence to Orleans, and thence to Belfort.

Let us indicate the only conditions which render improvised or half-drilled forces of any utility against regular troops.

### ADVICE TO AN ARMED NATION ON THE DEFENSIVE.

I. Lead the enemy well away from his defensive frontier and as far into the centre of your country as you can.

II. The capacity for defence and resources for the combats should be such that they could not be crushed by any battle, however decisive.

III. The theatre of military operations ought to be extended over as large an area as possible.

IV. These methods should be heartily supported by the character of the people, and the nation's sentiments and ideas and aspirations should be concentrated on the defence *à l'outrance*.

V. The line of march of the enemy should lead into mountains, forests, marshes, the country which has these in abundance has

all the more chances of a successful resistance. A large population is not the principal matter as there will be individuals enough, their military value is another matter. Whether the country be rich or poor is of small importance, if its people are true and brave folk. But it ought to be clearly understood, that a population accustomed to hard work and to privation is far more likely to make a vigorous resistance than a commercial and manufacturing population, and moreover it can better support the toils of war.

Germany in the time of Clausewitz was even more different from the Germany of to-day, than is the England of to-day from that of George III. He declares that numerous provinces in Germany present a very favourable theatre for national risings. In these districts, habitations of the peasants in place of being collected in villages or small towns are distant from each other. The country is covered in woods and intersected by rivers and swamps, and quartering troops presents endless difficulties. If the peasants dwell together in villages the attacker is able to leave garrisons in the most turbulent places or even to pillage or plunder them as measures of repression, a method which would be *impossible for example in Westphalia*. The italics are mine. At the present moment the plunder of the factories and forges and mercantile treasuries of Westphalia would be the most valuable loot obtained by any plundering army since the days of Tilly and Wallenstein. This district is now one of the richest industrial centres in the world, with an enormous amount of fixed and circulating capital. In fact it is rapidly "eating up" English competitors in steel and other industries.

The action of *levées en masse* and of popular bands ought not to be directed against the principal detachments or the large detachments of the enemy. They cannot produce any effect upon the heart of the enemy. They ought to work on the flanks of his line of operations, seeking to preserve as many districts as they can from the violence of his attack, and to prevent him from radiating far from his centre except with feeble detachments. They ought also to hover around his main line of advance and give him no rest, as he penetrates swarming around him. Once the movement is started, it becomes fiercer and fiercer. The bands at length boldly close up on the invader (like the Spanish guerillas, 1812 to 1813), and approaching the enemy's line of operations gradually ruin them and destroy the very organism of his existence.

Without ascribing to popular insurrection all the credit which is common among patriotic rhetoricians (who speak of fierce

risings like the fabulous dragons' teeth and rushing to arms as one man, and such like clap-trap), we must admit that it is not as easy to drive bands of rebels out of the way as it would be to deal with isolated groups of regular soldiers. When regulars retire they try to keep together, whereas the bands of partisans scatter in every direction after a reverse. In mountainous, or in wooded, or even hilly and broken, country the very bands which were beaten in front one day will be assailing the rear in a week or so. So, for blocking defiles, tearing up roads, and all the tactics of obstruction the defending peasantry are far more efficient than the advancing soldiery. The invader must send out detachments, and when even a convoy is surprised the energy of the insurrection increases enormously.

This all applies to the frontier and other "small" wars in which our army is so frequently engaged.

But the guerillas or peasants must not be allowed to concentrate in one great mass; in this case the regular army soon wins a victory, and weakens the defence by taking great numbers of prisoners. But on the flanks of the enemy considerable bodies may always be employed with good results.

The Spanish guerillas from 1809-1813 never defeated any French division in a regular battle. The surprise of Dupont at Baylen, 1808, was quite an exceptional case in the whole war. They caused large numbers of troops to be employed as line of communication guards or *étappen*. The Germans required 180,000 of these between the Rhine and Paris, 250 miles, in 1870, not to speak of their field army and forces investing fortresses.

But there must be a large proportion of well-trained and veteran soldiers, otherwise half-trained civilians never will conquer the invader if they be three times his numerical strength. Without these trained troops the population will soon lose their *élan* and self-confidence. The levies must never be exposed to decisive actions against regular invaders. If they are so used (whether in Spain or France or Germany), they will assuredly be defeated. If they are surprised by regular masses, they should disperse and not fight. Once the conditions of topography give regulars fair play guerillas, partisans or *levées en masse* are overwhelmed and crushed no matter how courageous they may be, no matter what their hereditary warlike instincts, no matter how intense their personal hatred of the invader.



THE FATE OF A STATE—ITS EXISTENCE—SHOULD NEVER DEPEND ON THE RESULT OF ANY BATTLE, HOWEVER GREAT. IT IS ALWAYS TOO SOON TO PERISH. A people even on the brink of an abyss should wrestle fiercely with its opponent before allowing itself to be tossed over the precipice. For its honour—for its independence—the feeblest State is bound to defy the strongest, under penalty of utter moral decay. The most onerous terms, of peace, are better for a nation than immediate readiness to yield after one or even a dozen engagements.

Hence the glory of Paris in 1870-71—hence the greatness of Russia in 1812, of Abd el Kader, of Schamyl, and of Fabius Cunctator. I have not space for more of this excellent chapter so I close this article with its final sentences.

However terrible the disasters of its forces before admitting defeat, the Government of an energetic nation ought to have recourse to a retreat into the interior of the country, supporting itself in the delaying power of fortresses and the armed peasantry (*e.g.* Wellington's retreat to the lines of Torres Vedras, 1810).

It is then desirable that the wings of the theatre of war be bounded by mountains or by very difficult territory which will favour strategic action on the invaders flanks. (See Defence of Virginia 1861-1864.)

In the course of his advance the invader is compelled to blockade or to besiege the strong places of the defence. He must leave numerous garrisons on his lines of communications which are daily lengthened. He must detach whole corps or divisions to secure his new acquisitions, and to prevent the rising from becoming strong in the provinces close to those through which he must pass. Every day he thus weakens himself by the diminution of his numbers, and of his supplies and war stores, and the day will come before all is over when the defender can turn the tables of the attack and put the invader in a serious predicament by the assumption of the offensive.

*E.g.* Wellington in 1811 and 1813; Russia in 1812; Napoleon in 1814; Lee and Jackson 1862; Gambetta's forces from September 1870 up to the fall of Metz. But once the German troops round Metz were released by its capitulation, 27th October, and could be distributed on the lines, Dijon to Orleans and Rouen to Amiens, the French levies suffered disasters in every direction, November 1870 to January 1871, and all efforts to relieve Paris failed.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONVERGING ACTION IN ATTACK AND DIVERGING ACTION IN DEFENCE; OR, EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR LINES.

THESE two forms of defensive and offensive action occur so frequently, both in theory and practice, that one is apt to look upon them as necessary parts of attack and defence, which is, in reality, not the case.

However, we must reflect upon them so as to obtain, once for all, clear ideas respecting them, and in order that we may be able to take a broader view of attack and defence, and not be hampered incessantly by the notion that the one or the other is of necessity part of either attack or defence.

In tactics, as well as in strategy, the defender is always represented as waiting patiently and immovably for the arrival of the attacker, who is, on the contrary, supposed to be moving directly against his waiting adversary. It therefore follows that the attacker has the option of making turning or enveloping movements as long as he is moving, and his enemy keeps still. The freedom of choice which allows the attacker to select his method of assault, and as to whether it shall be converging or not, gives him at first sight an advantage. But this liberty is only tactical, it does not always exist in strategy.

As a matter of fact, it very rarely happens that the two wings of a line of defence are absolutely fixed in tactics. In strategy it very frequently occurs; for example, when the line extends from one sea to another or lies between neutral territories.

In such a case as this the attacker has no choice, the attack cannot be convergent. All enveloping and turning actions are impossible for him. He can only operate directly on the front of the line of defence. It is still worse when the execution of a convergent movement is the only course open to him. Russia and

France would be forced to choose this method of attack against Germany ; they could not possibly unite their forces.

If we can show that in the majority of cases the concentric form is the weaker, it follows that the advantage which the assailer may sometimes obtain by the greater liberty of choice of action is balanced by his being obliged in other circumstances to employ of necessity the weaker form.

We will now closely examine the question from the points of view of both tactics and strategy.

By the concentration of forces from divergent points to a centre it has been laid down as a great advantage that the forces in movement gradually get closer to each other. This is true, but the supposed advantage does not follow upon it, for the union takes place on both sides, so that the equilibrium remains undisturbed. So it is with dispersion by eccentric movements.

But another and better advantage of converging lines is, that forces operating on these lines are directed towards a given point, those operating on diverging lines are not. What then are the results ?

Here we must separate tactics and strategy.

It will not be necessary to carry the analysis far, and we shall simply consider the following points as to the tactical advantages of this form of action.

1. A cross fire, or at least a strong effect of fire, as soon as everything is brought within a certain range.
2. Attack on one of the enemy's divisions from several sides at once.
3. Cutting off the enemy's retreat.

The cutting off of a retreat can also be considered strategically, but it is clearly much more difficult, for great spaces are not easily blocked.

The attack upon a given point from many sides is generally more effectual and decisive, the smaller the body is upon whom the attack is directed, and the nearer it approaches to the extreme limit, *i.e.* a single combatant. An army can easily meet an attack from many sides, a division less easily. A battalion is only capable of resisting a large force when it is formed in square, a single man can make no opposition at all.

Strategy is concerned with larger masses of men, greater lengths of time and more extensive spaces than is tactics. Hence it follows that the many-sided attack in strategy has not the same result as the same thing in tactics.

#### THE EFFECT OF FIRE.

The effect of fire is not within the scope of strategy. Something else stands in its place. It is that tottering of the base which every army feels in a greater or lesser degree when a victorious enemy, be he near or far, is on its rear.

For example, A and B are placed on the flanks of the central common point, towards which they are operating. The action which is produced upon A, without losing any of its force on the central point, makes itself felt also by B.

Concentric action has this advantage, that whilst the action against A is at the same time one against B, the force is by no means diminished, therefore the sum total of the effect is not A plus B, but something more than the results of separate efforts.

In short, the armies which successfully combine produce a greater effect than if they originally started united. Clausewitz seems to court obscurity.

We find something in divergent action to oppose to this. That is the fact that the forces are closer to each other and move on interior lines. Hence this act, as it were, increases the advantages of the defender to such an extent that the attacker is unable to meet him without a large superiority of forces.

The usual idea of the defender is to wait for a favourable moment in which to move in his turn, which must necessarily be later than that of his assailant, but still it occurs before very long in order to prevent the troops from becoming atrophied by a too lengthy inactivity.

It is then that the advantage of concentric attacks and movements on interior lines acquire their true value, and assures to the divergent form means of victory usually more certain and stronger than those which are to be obtained by the opposite method. But victory must precede pursuit. It is necessary that one should conquer before one begins to think of menacing the enemy's lines of retreat.

Briefly we can see a certain resemblance, somewhat similar to that which exists on the whole in attack and defence. The converging form leads to more brilliant results, the divergent (inner line) produces more certain effects. The former is the weaker, but has a more positive object; the latter is the stronger, but with a more negative object.

It appears that in principle there exists a certain amount of balance in the two methods of employing forces in war; added to this that the defence is frequently obliged to forsake divergent action, and make use of the convergent form, therefore one is not right in laying it down as an indisputable axiom that the latter (the convergent) form, is THE one for attack, in order to secure absolute superiority over the defenders in every case.

So far all we have said relates to both strategy and tactics; now there is a most important point to be considered which deals only with strategy. The advantage of interior lines becomes the greater as the distances which these lines occupy increase.

In distances of some thousands of yards or half a mile the time which is gained naturally cannot be so great as with distances of many days' march or even twenty to thirty miles. The first, *i.e.* short distances, concern tactics; the latter, *i.e.* longer distances, relate to strategy. But in strategy one requires a longer time in which to attain an object than one does tactically, and an army is not overcome as easily as a battalion, as we have said before. Still, this time can only increase up to a certain point, *i.e.* till the occurrence of a battle, or perhaps the few days during which a battle may safely be avoided or delayed. Further, there is a much greater difference in the start which is obtained in one case over the other.

In tactics it must be remembered that the operations of each of the adversaries are conducted, if not under the eyes of the other, at least almost in sight, and that under these conditions secrecy as to movements must necessarily be of short duration, whereas, by reason of the greater distances in which strategy operates, it generally happens that the enemy is concealed from his adversary for at least a day; not infrequently, indeed, he remains in ignorance for weeks at a time as to the movements of those moving on interior lines.

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Here again is another great advantage to the party which in the nature of things desires secrecy most, *i.e.* the defender.

Here we will close our considerations of converging and diverging lines with relation to attack and defence.

There can be no doubt that the success of Napoleon in his early Italian campaign on the offensive gave interior *versus* exterior lines a hold on men's imaginations which they long retained. It so happened also, that in the same year, 1796, the Archduke Charles by the Rhine and the Danube, after retiring to the Naab, turned on Jourdain and Moreau and drove them back across the Rhine in divergent retreats. Napoleon in turn defeated the Archduke Charles in 1809 by interior lines on the Danube from Ratisbon to Vienna. I need not refer to the converging attacks by the Allies in France in 1814, and to the brilliant victories of Napoleon in February against Blucher and Schwartzberg in turn. But he had to yield to superior converging forces from the Rhine and Belgium, in March and April of that year.

He tried to repeat his Italian strategy against Blucher and Wellington in 1815, but they converged on his front and right flank by the evening of June 18 with disastrous results to his Empire. Johnson, Jackson, and Lee deliberately adopted the defensive offensive plans of Napoleon and the Archduke Charles in 1862-1865. On the other hand, a tremendous converging movement from divergent lines, the Mississippi, Georgia, the Shenandoah Valley, the Rappahannock, and the sea, commanded by Grant and executed by Sherman and Sheridan and Butler and a number of other generals, crowded in on Lee in 1864 and brought about the surrender of Richmond in 1865.

Since 1864 convergent movements have found favour not only with European generals but also with the Japanese. The campaigns of Moltke in Bohemia in 1866 and in France 1870, and Manchuria 1904-5, are splendid examples of converging movements working with scarcely a hitch, and resulting in the timely arrival at the decisive moments of great battles of armies which moved to the battle from different parts of the compass and almost encircled the enemy's line, and either shut up the enemy in a fortress, as after Gravelotte, or took him prisoner, as at Sedan, or compelled him to make a ruinous retreat, as at Königgratz and Mukden.

Far be it from me to take sides for either great strategic movement. The inner line well handled breaks the hostile front, as in 1862; the converging movement threatens the flank, as in 1866 and 1905. To combine armies moving from different directions on the decisive battlefield, as did Wellington and Graham at Vittoria 1813, and Lee and Jackson and Longstreet at 2nd Bull Run in 1862, and the Elbe Army and Prince Frederick Charles and the Crown Prince at Sadowa 1866, is the very consummation of the military art. But I must be impartial and set off some great German authority against another. I use Von Donat's translation of Von Caemmerer's 'Development of Strategical Science.'

Clausewitz already reckoned with the fact that a division, even without special advantages of ground, would be able to resist superior numbers for some hours before its action could take an unfavourable turn, but with the effect

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of fire of our days we must estimate the power of resistance as considerably higher, provided the division is acting correctly and does not allow itself to be too easily wedged in. The experiences of the attacks in the Boer War were repeated in the campaign in Manchuria; even when an attack against a resolute enemy was successful it took a long time to carry it through.

Moltke says, pages 218-219: "If the army has approached the enemy in one body before the battle, every new separation with the object of enveloping or turning the enemy will necessitate a flank march within his striking distance. Incomparably more favourable will things shape themselves if on the day of battle all the forces can be concentrated from different points towards the field of battle itself. In other words, if the operations have been conducted in such a manner that a final short march from different points leads all available forces simultaneously upon the fronts and flanks of the adversary. In that case strategy has done the best it can ever hope to attain and great results must be the consequence."

We have seen in our French friend's Essays on the Campaign in Bohemia how Benedek missed all his opportunities of action on interior lines and thus allowed his adversaries to concentrate. It is quite true that these separate and convergent lines succeeded in 1864, 1866, and 1905. On the other hand, separation and convergent lines are very risky unless the utmost confidence can be placed by the Commander-in-Chief in his subordinate generals, and unless the functions of the Staff are discharged with the utmost regularity and skill. Scherff, a modern German writer, holds "that as regards the handling of masses for the ultimate attainment of the object of operations, that is to say for the strategic tactical victory in battle, the great Corsican has been and must remain without a rival," and consequently he recommends to keep all the forces as much as possible collected, and only to consent to a separation when such is absolutely necessitated by consideration of supply and by the requirements of detached duties, or when there is a guarantee that by the division of forces the enemy can really be deceived. Only an actual and considerable numerical superiority would allow us without disadvantage the luxury of separation.

### "EXPERT FOOLING."

In one of the daily papers recently "experts" are quoted without their names being given as ridiculing the absurdity of our studying the campaigns of 1864, 1866, and Waterloo. Verily these are blind leaders of the blind. Why, Lee and Jackson actually quoted the incidents of 1814 as precedents for 1862. Moltke studied Napoleonic methods for 1866 and 1870. Napoleon advised all his officers to read and re-read the campaigns of Frederick and Turenne and Cæsar and Alexander, and printed and circulated among his officers maps of Marlborough's campaign of 1704. Yet the champions of ignorance in England would have us believe that we cannot learn the art of war by any campaigns of earlier date than the Manchurian War and the campaigns in South Africa. I take it Oyama and Lord Roberts would repudiate this preposterous and contemptible doctrine as heartily as would Clausewitz or Von Cammerer. I happen to know that Japanese officers studied our Peninsular War most carefully, and



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that both ancient and modern military history are obligatory branches of study for both American and German officers. It will be a bad day for our Army when anonymous "experts" can persuade our Staff to think that the art of war began in 1899!

With the object of facilitating independent study of illustrations of the principles laid down by Clausewitz and Moltke, I give a list of converging operations of historic importance from Tovey (edition 1906, p. 90). A fuller discussion on these great strategic movements will be found in Rüstow, 'Operations of War' (French edition), chapter xv.

### CONCENTRIC STRATEGIC ATTACK AND ANALOGOUS COMBINED OPERATIONS.

- 1794. Plan of Mack to attack the French on the Lys.
- 1795. French general plan of attack.
- 1796. Austrian attack against Bonaparte to relieve Mantua.
- 1799. Hohenzollern and Klenau against Genoa.
- 1800. Plan for the Austrian War against France.
- 1801. Macdonald and Moncey against Trent.
- 1808. Lannes and Ney against Custaños and Palafox (Tudela).
- 1809. Soult and Victor against Portugal.
- 1811. Union of Marmont and Soult against Wellington; retreat of the latter from Badajoz.
- 1812. Kutusoff, Tchitchagoff, and Wittgenstein against Napoleon in retreat (Berésina).
- 1813. Plan of operations of Trachenburg, executed by the Allies in the month of October (Leipsic).
- 1813. Macdonald against Blucher (Katzbach).
- 1814 and 1815. Plan of operations of the Allies against Napoleon.
- 1831. Combined project of operations between Schachoffski and the Grand Army of Russia (Grochow).
- 1831. Polish dispositions for the combat of Igany.
- 1847. Dufour against Fribourg and Lucerne.
- 1848. Charles Albert's plan of attack against Radetski on the Mincio (Custoza).
- 1848. Jellachich against the Hungarians (Veleusze, Ozora).
- 1848. Windischgraetz's plan against the Hungarians.
- 1849. General plan of Charles Albert against Radetski.



- 1855. Plan of Napoleon III. for the Crimean campaign.
- 1862. } Plan of Federals against Johnson and Lee.
- 1864. }
- 1866. Prussians against Benedek.
- 1870. The Third German Army and the Army of the Meuse  
against MacMahon.
- 1871. January. Prince Frederick Charles against Chanzu.
- 1877. General plan of Sulieman Pacha to relieve Plevna in  
the month of December.
- 1894. Japanese against Phong-Yang.

We must close by emphasising the striking changes in the doctrines of generals since the times of Clausewitz and Jomini, both of whom were experienced staff officers in great crises as well as profound and brilliant authors. They were convinced that interior lines were superior from the point of view of strategy to exterior lines. Clausewitz, moreover, considered an advance with divided forces, with the intention of bringing about a strategic envelopment, very risky and only advisable when there is distinctly a great superiority . . . of course by superiority we mean not of numbers but of real force, mental, moral, and material. Of course, Clausewitz also would sanction operations on exterior or converging lines when the original distribution of the army or corps is such that their immediate concentration would entail too long marches and thus too much waste of time. He is of opinion that it is always easier for an army to cut its way through converging armies than for them to make their adversaries prisoners. He uses Napoleon's passage over the Berésina to prove how difficult it was to cut off an army, as in this case the army was intercepted in the most unfavourable condition.

I may add that the Japanese found it impossible to intercept Kuropatkin. Although Benningesen in 1807 had the River Alle behind him and a defile behind that, he was not cut off from his line of retreat by his defeat at Friedland. We have so recently discussed Königgratz that I need not point out how easily Benedek drew off the bulk of his army across the Elbe and made a skilful eccentric retreat.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DEFENCE OF STREAMS AND RIVERS (LARGE RIVERS).

STREAMS and rivers, when we are considering their defence, must be put in the same category as mountains, and are classed as strategical obstacles. But in two points they differ from mountains as to their relative and absolute defence.

In the same manner as mountains they increase the strength of the defence, but they have this peculiarity, that they either withstand all assault or else the defence fails absolutely.

If the river is very large, given favourable conditions its passage may prove to be impossible. But if the defence of a river be broken at any one point, a continuous defence cannot be carried on as in mountain warfare, and this act finishes the affair. Another peculiarity is, except rivers flow through mountainous country, that in many cases they admit of very good combinations, generally better for a decisive battle than are mountains. Both, too, are dangerous and seductive objects which often lead to false measures and awkward situations ; we shall consider these results when we come to deal more closely with the defence of rivers.

History is somewhat poor in actual examples of successful defence of rivers, and therefore one is justified in thinking that rivers present a less formidable strategical barrier than was once supposed ; but that there is a great influence existing, both with reference to a battle and also in the defence of a country, is undeniable.

Before proceeding to the study of the question in its entirety, we must enumerate the different points of view from which we intend to consider it.

Firstly, we must be careful to distinguish between the *strategical* results, to which the effective defence of streams and rivers may



lead, and the *natural* influence which they have, from the defensive point of view, upon the country through which they flow, even if they be not directly defended.

The defence may take one of the three following forms—

1. An absolute resistance by the main body.
2. A pretended resistance or mere feint.
3. A relative resistance by means of detached sub-divisions, outposts, covering lines, etc.

Whichever of these forms be the one selected, there is a further choice of three ways in which to carry it out—

- (a) A direct defence with the object of preventing the passage.
- (b) An indirect defence in which the river and its valleys are only utilised as a means to the better combination of forces for a battle.
- (c) An absolutely direct defence, carried on in an unassailable position on the side of the river occupied by the enemy.

We will now proceed to consider these three forms of defence, first in conjunction with the most important form, and then in relation to each other.

Let us then consider the direct opposition to the passage of an enemy. This is only possible when great masses of water and large rivers are in question. In this case, space, time, and force considerably complicate the question.

After ascertaining the length of time required by the enemy for the building of a bridge, we must determine the interval which should separate the corps to whom the defence of the river is entrusted. The number of corps will, of necessity, be equal to the number of times that this interval must be maintained in the course of the defence. Therefore, in dividing the general effective of the army by the number of corps or bodies of troops thus obtained, one can arrive at the *effective* of each one. We have only to compare this *effective* with that of the troops, which by other means the enemy can throw from one bank to the other during the building of the bridge, in order to know whether we shall be able to offer a successful resistance.

It must be admitted that in theory the passage will be impossible if the defence is in a position to oppose the enemy with very superior forces, about double those which he is able to convey

over the river by some means or another during the time his bridge is in building. For example, let us suppose the enemy requires twenty-four hours in which to construct his bridge, and that during that time he can only put across by all the means at his disposal 20,000 men; if the defence within twelve hours is able to appear at any point whatever with the same number of men, of necessity the passage will be impossible. In the case cited, 20,000 men of the defending army will always appear on the threatened point before more than 10,000 of the army can pass from one bank to the other. Now, allowing time for the orders to circulate, a corps on the march can cover four miles in twelve hours: in the example we have chosen the defence should be able to place along the river, corps of 20,000 men at eight miles from each other, which would, in a distance of twenty-four miles of bank, give an effective of 60,000 men.

Under such conditions the defence would always be in a position to place 20,000 men in good time at any point threatened by the enemy, even if he were to attempt the passage at two points at once; while if he risked the passage from only one place, a force of 40,000 could be opposed to him.

Yet Soult failed to do this at the Bidassoa, 1813, by reason of the fact that Wellington quite deceived him as to the real design of his double attack. On the other hand, under similar conditions, Lee and Jackson stopped Hooker at Chancellorsville after he had passed the river Rappahannock, and defeated his army in detail, May, 1863.

Three circumstances exercise a decisive effect.

Firstly, the breadth of the river; secondly, the means of passage; thirdly, the numerical force of the defending troops.

Upon the breadth of the river depends the length of time necessary for the building of a bridge, a time in which the defensive troops should profit by projecting themselves on the threatened point.

From this point of view the Turks completely failed against the Russian passage of the Danube in 1877.

A secondary means of crossing by the attacker depends upon the number of men that he can throw on the opposite bank during the building of his bridge. As to the numbers, that of the attacking army does not enter into our calculations here.

No mere superiority of numbers can force a passage ; the number that can get across unresisted is the point. Can the defence stop these in time ; can they cover the construction of the bridge ?

If we leave topographical peculiarities out of the question, a single rule will suffice. The defending troops, determined theoretically as we have seen, should be established on the river bank, and each section in a state of concentration. We say, on the bank of the river, as all formations further back unnecessarily increase the length to be traversed to any threatened point. As the volume of water assures the defenders against any movement on the part of the enemy, it is not necessary to place forces in the rear, as if it were a reserve or line of defence on ordinary ground.

Besides, the roads running parallel to the course of the stream are generally more fit for practical use than those roads running perpendicularly or obliquely which lead from the interior of the country to a given point on its banks.

As the defending forces are formed on the river itself the generals commanding find themselves surveying the ground in person, and thus the surveillance becomes superior to that which is to be attained by a simple line of posts.

We have said that each defending corps should be concentrated. Every man of experience knows what is implied by the long hours spent in the assembling of troops, and understands that it is just by pre-concentration that much of the force of action is gained. It is certain that at first sight it seems very tempting to oppose the direct crossing of the enemy in boats by the placing of a quantity of small posts on the river bank. But, with some exceptions, such a measure would be excessively dangerous.

A superior fire from the opposite bank can easily paralyse the resistance of some of these little posts, and one knows that the enemy will only choose another point for his passage. Therefore one can see if we cannot be numerically strong enough to defend the river as one would defend the ditch of a fortress, such a method of defence not only falls short of its object but may even defeat the desired end.

Having established the principles of the general formation of troops for defence, we must occupy our minds, first, with the special peculiarities which the river presents, and secondly, by the removal

and destruction of all means of passage which the enemy might make use of; finally, the influence which might be exercised by any fortress situated on the river.

It is absolutely necessary that a river, as a line of defence, should have, right and left, up as well as down stream, strong points which cannot be turned, such as the sea or a neutral territory. Now, such conditions as these are only to be found at great distances, therefore the defence of a river can only be possible by very extended lines, and consequently the possibility of placing great masses of troops behind a relatively short line of river is out of the question, and we do not propose to deal with any put *possible* facts.

When we say a *relatively short line*, we mean such a development as would not differ materially from an ordinary line of defence with no river. Such cases, as we said, do not occur, and all defences of rivers, as far as the extension of troops is concerned, resolve themselves into some form of cordon. This form of extension of troops is absolutely powerless against turning movements by the enemy, quite the reverse being the case with the concentrated position. Therefore, when a turning movement is possible, the defence of a river, whatever happy results it may appear to promise under other circumstances, becomes a most dangerous enterprise.

Of course it is almost unnecessary to say that all points of the river lend themselves more or less to the enemy's passage, but all are not equally suitable. One can lay down a few general rules on this point (defensive), but local peculiarities present themselves under such varying circumstances that a simple survey of the river, added to the information supplied by the inhabitants of surrounding districts, will be far more valuable than any amount of theoretical precept. Generally, however, we may state that the things which most directly help the passage of a river are the roads leading down to it, its affluents, the towns through which it flows, and most of all, the islands in its bed.

The greater height of a given bank, the bend which a river takes at the point chosen for crossing, to which all works on military art give so great a position, do not in reality exercise any serious influence, except in the rare event of an absolute defence of a river bank.



Whatever be the circumstances, which make the crossing of a river easier at one point than at another, they must also have an effect upon the formation of the defending troops and modify to some extent the general idea of their formation ; but one cannot insist too much upon the danger of allowing this to influence one to any great extent, or deviate too far from the general idea, by relying upon the great difficulties in the way of passage from certain points, for the enemy would not hesitate to select these very points, whatever difficulties he would encounter, if he thought that the defence would neglect to place their troops there, and consequently he would run but little risk of meeting them. In any case, a strong occupation of an island is absolutely necessary, as a serious attack thereon gives the surest indication of the point of passage which the enemy intends to choose.

Study the influence of the island of Lobau, 1809, and the islands in the Danube south of Simnitsa, 1877.

It is desirable also, if there be no good roads parallel to the river, that all smaller ones running parallel be repaired and put in order and connected by short new roads where necessary. This must be done in order to assure the troops mobility up and down the river bank.

As to the destruction and removal of means of crossing, this is often very hard on the river itself, and requires considerable time ; but if the affluents are in the enemy's hands it is almost impossible. Therefore it is important to fortify such affluents where they fall into the river.

The pontoons which an enemy brings with him are rarely sufficient for the passage of a large river, therefore the river itself, its affluents, and the available timber in the vicinity are great considerations, and should these be favourable the passage is almost an impossibility.

Both French and English pontoon bridges were sometimes lacking at the needful moment in the Peninsula.

The fortresses on either bank, particularly those on the enemy's side, serve not only to prevent his crossing at all points near them, either up or down stream, but also close the mouths of the affluents and receive all vessels which may be captured. The



difficulty of passing a river is materially increased by the existence of deep valleys with steep sides or marshy banks ; but this does not constitute an actual barrier to the entrance of a country as does a large volume of water, an indispensable condition of a direct defence.

A direct or passive defence can seldom or never lead to a decisive victory, because the object is to prevent the enemy's coming to the other side at all, or to crush any such parts of his force as do come over, and also because the river prevents the defender from following up his success by a vigorous offensive. But much time may be gained in this way, which is generally of great value to the defence. If several attempts to cross fail, so much the better. If the enemy is compelled by the river to take his troops in another direction, it is a still greater advantage ; and if the enemy is not resolutely determined in his advance, a river will probably stop his movements and constitute a permanent protection to the country.

When considerable troops are engaged a direct defence of a large river may, under favourable circumstances, be considered as an excellent defensive means, to the results of which modern commanders have paid but scanty attention.

The above suppositions may be easily realised on such rivers as the Rhine or the Danube, where an efficient defence of twenty-four miles of river could be carried out with 60,000 men, and a great resistance to superior forces maintained, and such a result is worthy of consideration.

But the Austrian defence of the Rhine against the French under Moreau failed completely in 1796 and again in 1797.

We must explain why we say "a superior force." According to this theory everything depends upon the means of crossing and nothing on the number of the force, provided that it is no smaller than the defending force. But we must not forget that rivers, having no absolute *points d'appui*, may be turned, and this is easier if the enemy has a considerable superiority of forces. If the attack is successful, however, it is by no means to be compared with a lost battle, and cannot lead to a distinct defeat since part only of the force is employed, and the river prevents the enemy from following up his advantage, as much time is required for the passage of troops by a single bridge.

We must avoid hasty conclusions of the type that "a river is a river," and we must duly weigh and endeavour to appreciate the special situation from all points of view, as what may be the best course in one case may prove to be a disastrous mistake in another. Attack and movement are not, as some seem to think, the whole art of war, nor is it comprised in the picture of an hussar at full gallop brandishing his sword over his head, clad in his splendid parade uniform !

A direct defence of a river, given favourable conditions and large bodies of troops, can lead to good results. 60,000 men on a certain length could prevent 100,000 from crossing, but a corps of 10,000 would not be able to prevent 10,000 men, nor one-half that number, if the latter chose to incur the risk after getting across the river of at once attacking the enemy.

Direct defence only seems suitable (in Europe at any rate) to large rivers on the lower half of their course.

It is quite impossible in our space to enumerate the celebrated defences of rivers, which seldom were successful. The same conditions as justified the attacker in venturing on the passage at all, generally enabled his efforts to succeed. The fame of Alexander and of Cæsar largely depends on their success in these operations. The Oxus and the Juxartes in ancient times, and the rivers of the Punjab in more modern times, are famous in the annals of Asia, only to be thrown into the shade by the tremendous defences of the Manchurian rivers by the Russians against the Japanese.

The defence of the Douro by Soult against Wellington, who passed, in 1809, by a very clever surprise movement ; and Soult's able actions on, and retirements from, the banks of the Bidassoa, Nivelle, Nive, Adour, and Gave de Pau in 1813 and 1814, are amongst the most remarkable river actions in which the British were engaged.

Fights in connection with the defence of rivers were a prominent feature of the whole series of operations 1861-1865. The Bull Run, the Rappahannock, the Mattapony, the North Anna, the Pamunky, the Chickahominy, the James in Virginia were serious obstacles to the Federal Generals McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, and Grant in turn ; while the Mississippi and the Tennessee, and the rivers of Georgia from Chattanooga to the sea were also defended at point after point by the Confederates.

In South Africa the Boers made use of river banks, though the rivers were themselves scarcely worthy of the name, to delay the British in 1899-1902. The French in 1870 might have used the rivers between the Rhine and the Marne as serious bulwarks against the German invasion, but they evacuated them in turn with scarcely a fight. In the later period of the campaign under Gambetta we see that the defence of rivers like the Somme by Faidherbe, the Loire by D'Aurelle, the Loir by Chanzy, the Huisne by Chanzy, and the Lisaine by Von

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Werder, are famous incidents in the national rising after the fall of Napoleon III. at Sedan on the Meuse.

Rüstow gives the following as among the most interesting and instructive operations on rivers in modern European history.

- 1796 and 1797. Bonaparte's passages of the Po and the Mincio.
- 1799. Masséna's passage of the Limmat.
- 1799. Attempt of the Archduke Charles to pass the Aar.
- 1800. Moreau's passage of the Rhine.
- 1805. Massena's passage of the Adige at Verona.
- 1809. Napoleon on the Danube, May and July—Aspern and Wagram.
- 1812. Napoleon at the Beresina.
- 1813. Blucher on the Elbe at Wartenberg.
- 1813. Blucher's passage of the Rhine at Caub.
- 1831. Diebitch the Narew.
- 1831. Paskievitch the Vistula.
- 1849. Haynau the Raab.
- 1849. Ramberg the Theiss.
- 1854. Russians the Danube at Galatz and Silistria.
- 1877. Russians the Danube at Braila, Galatz, and Simnitsa.

The battle of Friedland, 1807, and that of Königgratz in 1866, were fought by armies which had their backs to rivers, but in the latter case the Austrians stood on the defensive along the Bistritz.

Magenta in 1859 was a celebrated case of the defence of a river failing owing to a clever turning movement, and so was the Gave de Pau at Orthes, 1814. At Vittoria, 1813, Joseph made a very feeble defence of the Zadora in his front.

The fortified passages of the rivers of Belgium have been celebrated in modern history from the days of Marlborough till the spirited detaining action by Ziethen on the Sambre in 1815. The retreat of the British in 1794 from the Scheldt across the rivers of Holland to Bremen, with constant rear-guard actions at many passages, was one of the most dreary episodes of our military history.

To pierce a way over the Mincio or the Adige in spite of the old Italian Quadrilateral would have been a difficult enterprise, nor was it attempted in 1859 by Napoleon III. The Russians are equally proud of their Polish Quadrilateral with its citadel at Warsaw. But the passage rather than the defence of rivers will be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

### RIVER PASSAGES.

THE second mode of defence of rivers and streams is by an indirect defence, which avails itself of the watercourse and the valley only as conditions for securing favourable chances in a battle.

This form of defence is particularly suitable for smaller rivers of lesser importance as well as for those with deep valleys. A position is taken up at such a distance from the river that one can throw one's self upon the enemy at the moment when he has crossed before he is able to rejoin his columns; or if he is limited to one point and has passed by one bridge only, then he must be caught and hemmed in between the bridge and the road.

If one is obliged to give battle under these conditions, where the river is in the rear and there is only one line of retreat open to one, one is likely to be paralysed, and to find one's self in an extremely awkward situation.

The defence of a river running in a deep valley depends upon making the best use of this circumstance.

We consider the formation of an army in large corps, dispersed along the river to be the best means of defence, supposing that the enemy cannot effect the passage in great force unexpectedly, otherwise there would be a danger of being beaten in detail.

If the conditions which favour the defence are not sufficiently advantageous the enemy will be in possession of ample means of crossing. If there are many islands or fords, if the river be not sufficiently deep or large, and if the defender for some reason or another is too weak, this method must be abandoned. In order to effect closer touch, the troops should take up a position farther back from the river, and then we must try to concentrate rapidly

upon the point where the enemy attempts to cross, in order to attack him before he has been able to get command of several passages. The river must be watched and partially defended, by a chain of outposts, while the main body, broken up into corps, takes up suitable positions some distance in the rear. This is usually a distance of a few hours' march.

The chief object is the passage of the defile, formed by the river and its valley. The volume of water no longer plays the chief part, and usually a deep and rocky valley is of more use to the defence than a very wide river, for a valley of any size offers more difficulties than is at first sight supposed to be the case. It takes some time to pass it, and during the operation the attacker is exposed to the possibility of the enemy's appearing on the surrounding heights.

This was the case with Soult's defence actions on the Bidassoa, Nivelle and Nive and with the Russian position on the Alma, and with Benedek's proposed position at Dubenetz the 30th June, 1866.

If the troops in front are pushed on too far they meet the enemy too soon, and may be crushed by superior forces, if, on the contrary, they do not advance far enough, they are in the worst possible situation for a battle. The undertaking of such a passage when one knows that the enemy must be met on the opposite bank, is either a very dangerous and hazardous proceeding, or else implies the possession of superior numbers and great confidence in the leader.

Benningsen acted in this fashion at Friedland, and Wellington at Vittoria and Bidassoa and Soult at Albuera and Hooker at Chancellorsville.

Naturally the line of defence in such a case cannot be so extended as in the direct defence of a large river, for the passage does not present such difficulties, and besides, the intention of the defender is to oppose with a united force. Therefore the line of defence is more exposed to the enemy's turning movements. But this carries him out of his general line of advance, which would be about at right angles to the river, therefore any turning movement would take him out of his course and expose his line of retreat. The defender will also have some advantage over his advancing foe, although the latter be not stopped actually at the critical point of passage.

The question of the volume of water is here not of so much importance as that of the depth of the valley. We do not mean by "valley" a mountain gorge in this connection, but one of those districts, where, even though the country be fairly level, the channels of even small streams may have deep and precipitous sides (like the Douro), and those with marshy and otherwise difficult sides which make their approach troublesome (like the Chickahominy and the Bistritz). Under these conditions the defender can place himself in a very excellent position behind a river with steep banks. This is a strategic measure of the best kind.

There is a danger, however, lest the defender should over-extend his force. There is a temptation to be drawn on from one point to another and thence to yet another, and not to stop where we should, and this is very foolhardy, for if we do not fight with our forces united, we miss the whole effect which we desire to produce, and there is a defeat, a retreat, confusion in the ranks and losses of various kinds by different corps which approach to a defeat, although resistance has not been pushed to its utmost limit. Therefore it is indispensable that the defensive does not extend too far, but always to be ready to assemble the troops on the evening of the day on which the enemy passes. This is enough. All considerations of time, space, and force are subject to local considerations.

The battle to which all these circumstances lead must be on the defender's side most impetuous and irresistible. The feigned passages by which the enemy will keep him in uncertainty for some time will prevent his discovering the real point of passage any too soon. The defender's best advantage lies in the enemy's troops being immediately in front of him, if any corps should pass and threaten his flank, he cannot, as in a decisive battle, meet such movements from the rear, for he would thus destroy the advantages which he possesses. Therefore the affair must be settled in front of him, before any other bodies have time to arrive and become dangerous by a swift and vigorous attack and defeat.

At Magenta, on the Ticino, in 1859, there was an attack of the French on the Austrian front and right flank. Wellington had succeeded by the same manoeuvre at Orthes, 1814.



But in this case the aim of the defender is never to resist superior forces. He must not lose sight of the fact that he will have to attack in front the great bulk of the enemy, and even if the local circumstances are favourable for a defence, it will not be wise to adopt this mode of defence unless one first knows that one's forces can be opposed almost equally to those of the adversary. Thus it is that one should defend rivers of less importance and with deep valleys when one has to deal with large masses of troops. With such powerful means the defender can and should have a decisive end. He should concentrate all his force on crushing the enemy on the escarpments of the valley, and thus avoid the difficulties and dangers of a position scattered along the river. But if nothing is required but the reinforcement of a second line of defence, which is only intended to hold out for a short time, a defence of the slopes of the valley or the river bank may be made.

The French did not make any effective defence of the rivers between the Rhine and Paris, 1870.

Naturally one cannot count on such great advantages as in really mountainous country, but still, the resistance will at least be of longer duration than on flat ground. Only one thing makes this measure very dangerous and even impossible—that is, when the river has very sharp curves, which often happens when a river runs in a deep valley. For instance, take the Moselle. In its defence the isolated corps which the defender would place on the salient of the bends would be almost inevitably lost if a retreat were necessary. This method of defence of rivers is of secondary importance when a considerable number of troops are concerned, and can be applied also to the defence of greater rivers when the conditions permit; moreover, the defender can have recourse to this method when he particularly wishes to gain a decisive victory, *e.g.* Aspern, 1809; Fredericksburg, 1862; and Antietam, 1862.

When an army takes up a position with its front close to a stream or river or deep valley, with the intention of increasing its tactical force as an obstacle, and to strengthen its front, it is no longer in the sphere of strategy. If the cleft of ground is very considerable, the front of the position becomes unassailable. There is no more difficulty in passing round this position than any other,



therefore the effect is as if the defender had gone out of the attackers' way, so that this position can only be advisable when it threatens the communications of the assailant, so that he dare not deviate from his direct course, for fear of consequences, too serious to be risked.

Had Benedek, in 1866, retired across the Elbe before the battle of Königgratz, and fought between Josephstadt and Königgratz with fortresses on his flanks and a wide and unfordable river in his front, the Prussians had a plan for making a flank march along his front and turning his left while attacking his right also. The Russian positions on the Manchurian rivers were turned.

In this second method of defence, feigned attacks are easier to make and more dangerous to the defender, while the difficulty for the defender is to assemble all his forces at the right point. On the other hand, the defender has more time before him in which to weigh matters, as he can wait until the attacker has brought up his whole force, and a feigned attack is not so effective as is the defence of a cordon, where everything must be held, and the question in manipulating the reserve is not merely where the enemy has his chief force but which point will he first seek to force.

See Wellington's feints at the Douro and Ebro, the Zadora and the Bidassoa, and at the battle of Assaye in India. McDowell feints at 1st Bull Run, and Lee and Jackson against Pope on the Rappahannock.

With regard to both forms of defence for large and small rivers generally, if they are undertaken in the confusion and hurry of a defeat, with no preparation, without removal of the means of passage which the enemy might make use of, and with no precise knowledge of the country, they cannot carry out all that we have suggested. Therefore, it is always a mistake for an army to split itself up in a very extended position.

*Nothing succeeds in war unless it has been well and clearly thought out by a strong and energetic mind,* and a river defence will end badly if the only reason for its being undertaken is the fear of meeting the enemy in open field, and hoping that he may be stopped by the river or by the valley. There is little confidence in this case; the General is anxious and full of gloomy presentiments which are communicated to the whole Army, and they are only too likely to be realised. One does not expect in battles such equal conditions as in a duel, and nothing can save a defender who is

not quick to seize upon any advantage, whether of special knowledge of the country or freedom of movement, or rapid marches. Least of all will a river and stream assist him.

MEN and not rivers or mountains or fortresses or gold are the true defence of Empires.

A passive defence means defeat. The "Defensive-offensive" is not a good phrase, but it implies a sound policy.

See President Roosevelt's speeches on lack of MEN and WOMEN, May, 1908.

There is a third form of defence, which consists of a strong position on the enemy's side of the river; this is efficacious because of the danger in which he is of having his communications cut by the river, and being, in consequence, limited to a few bridges. But it is only to great rivers with a great volume of water to which we refer, for in the case of a small river in a deep ravine there are so many possible passages that there is no danger of the above. The position of the defender must be excessively strong, almost unassailable, otherwise the defence loses all advantages, and has to meet the enemy half-way. Or if the position is so strong that the enemy will not attack it, he will be obliged to confine his operations to the same bank as the defender, for, if he crosses, his communications will be exposed, but, on the other hand, the defender's communications are threatened also.

See McClellan's passage of the Chickahominy, and Lee's counterstroke at Gaines Mill, 1862.

In all cases where one army passes another, the great point is whose communications are most threatened, and whose are most secure, and who, therefore, can easiest be outbid, and who possesses the greatest amount of ultimate power on which to rely in extreme need? The river merely increases the danger of such movements to both sides, as both are equally dependent on bridges.

At Orthes, Soult's communications passed over another river on the rear. At Königgratz, Benedek had the Bistritz in front and the Elbe in rear. At Solferino, the Austrians had the Mincio fortified in rear. At Jena, the Prussians had the Saal in front. The position of the Allies at Talavera was not unlike that of the French at Blenheim.

The passage and dépôts of a defender are better secured by fortresses than are those of the defensive-offensive. We cannot

say that the Army protects the river or the river the Army, but in the connection between the two the country is defended, which is, after all, the main point.

This kind of defence is of no use at all unless some decisive blow be struck, if the enemy's General is too cautious and indisposed to push on energetically, it might be of use, or when nothing but small, slight advantages are looked for on either side. But if the General is bold, and in command of superior forces, we are indeed on perilous ground, very near an abyss. This form appears to be so scientific and bold, that it might be termed the elegant mode of defence! but *elegance is easily changed into folly, which is not so slight or so excusable a thing in war as in Society, therefore we have had but few examples of this form of defence.*

The only walk of life in which blatant and ignorant folly is promoted and applauded is in the sphere of modern party Government.

This form of defence is an auxiliary to the two first methods, as by the permanent occupation of a bridge and *tête-de-pont* one is enabled to threaten an attack.

Besides an absolute defence we may employ each of the above three methods as a feigned defence or show of resistance, which must be combined with other measures. But on a large river it becomes a complete system of stratagem, for a great number of detailed measures must be adopted, and operations last longer than under other circumstances, for often an enemy will take much time before crossing the river in sight of his opponent. Therefore the Army must divide and post itself along the river, but there is a great danger of serious loss if the corps engages in a real resistance, as the only reason for the measure is the lack of power to engage in a real defence. Therefore the Army must be so arranged that it can concentrate, when needful, in the rear, and to facilitate this, the feigned defence must be pushed so as to run the risk of its having to become a real defence.

Clausewitz gives as examples, the Rhine, 1813, to show the importance of such a defensive demonstration.

In a defence of the second class such demonstrations will be less effective, because attempts to cross are easier. In the third class they are even less effective, and produce no more result than the occupation of any other temporary position. It is not only the

effect of the resistance or the time gained which matters, it is the anxiety of the enemy, which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, causes him to give up his plans, even if he be not actually *forced* to do so.

Hamley's remarks on the defence of rivers and their attack are too well known to need recapitulation, but they should be studied, and in my opinion are much clearer and of more general utility than those of Clausewitz, who may be a great sage, but like other sages, and even lawyers, requires for the comprehension of ordinary men commentaries of greater length than his own treatises.

No apology is required for quoting Napoleon, but it must be remembered that the whole theory of river passage and line of defence and fortresses on the banks of the river or on the escarpments of run valleys is seriously altered by the development of long-range weapons.

I quote Maxims XXXVI., XXXVII., XXXVIII., and XXXIX., and I would advise the study of all the Maxims, of which there are several translations. Brett's and Aquilar's, as well as Henry's, to which I am referring.

"XXXVI. When the hostile army is covered by a river on which there are several *têtes-de-pont* it is no use approaching in front, this would scatter your army and expose you to be cut off. You must come to the river with your columns echeloned, so that there should be but one column, *i.e.* the one right in front, which the enemy could attack without risking his own flank. In the meanwhile, the light troops will reach the banks of the river, and having fixed on the part where they wish to cross it let them bear down on it rapidly, and throw the bridge. It should be observed that the place of crossing should be at some distance from the leading echelon, in order to deceive the enemy."

"XXXVII. As soon as one is master of a position commanding the opposite bank, facilities are acquired for effecting the crossing of the stream, especially if this position is of sufficient extent to hold a large number of pieces of artillery. This advantage is less when the stream is more than 600 yards wide, for, the grape-shot not reaching the other side, the troops resisting the passage can easily march past and shelter themselves from fire. It would come to this: that the grenadiers who are ordered to cross the river to protect the construction of the passage might reach the other bank, but would then be crushed by the enemy's fire, since their batteries, placed at a distance of 400 yards from the outlet of the bridge would be able to open a very murderous fire, and yet be more than 1000 yards distant from the batteries of the army wishing to pass over; so that the whole advantage in artillery lies on their side. In this case, too, the passage is impossible, unless it be by a successful surprise, or by taking advantage of a very pronounced bend, which would permit the establishment of batteries crossing their fires on the gorge. This isle or bend then forms a natural *tête-de-pont*, and gives the advantage to the attacking army. When a river is less than 120 yards broad, and a command is obtained of the opposite bank, the troops who have been landed on the other side, being under the protection of artillery, are so advantageously placed that, unless the river makes a bend, it is impossible for

the enemy to prevent the establishment of a bridge. The bridge being a defile, a semi-circle should be formed about its extremity, and the army must march past the fire of the opposite sides at a distance of 600 or 800 yards."

"XXXVIII. It is difficult to prevent an enemy who has crossing apparatus from passing over a river. When the army which opposes the passage has, as its aim, to cover a siege, it should take steps to arrive before the enemy in a position intermediate between the river, and the place to be covered as soon as the General commanding feels he cannot prevent the crossing."

"XXXIX. Turenne, in the campaign of 1645, was driven back with his army on Philipsburg by large forces; there was no bridge over the Rhine, but he took advantage of the ground between the bank and the Rhine as a suitable spot to be occupied. This should be a lesson to officers of talent, not only as to the construction of strong places, but also for that of the *tête-de-pont*. A space should be left between the place and the river, such that, without entering the place which would compromise its safety, an army might form and rally between the place and the bridge. An army retiring on Mayence, being pursued is necessarily compromised, since more than one day is needed to pass over the bridge, and the extent of Cassel is too small for an army to stay without encumbrance; there ought to have been 400 yards between the place and the Rhine. It is essential that the *têtes-de-pont* before large rivers should be traced by this principle, else they should offer but sorry help to the passage of a retreating army. The *têtes-de-pont* taught in schools are only good before small streams, where the passage is not long."

I would advise my readers to study the numerous passages of rivers described in the battles and leaders of the American Civil War, and to compare these with passages in the Peninsular War on the one hand, and in the Manchurian Campaign on the other hand. Suppose it is necessary to dislodge the enemy by attacks on both banks, the idea of having ready a mass to manœuvre, which will operate on the enemy's side of the river, and dislodge him as MacMahon did the Austrians in 1859, and as Lee cut off Porter from White House in 1862, was a favourite idea of Napoleon's, and was manifestly the basis of the plan of Moltke in the end of June, 1866, and is thus elaborated in General H. Bonnal's 'Sadowa.' I close this article by quoting Mr. C. F. Atkinson's excellent translation, pp. 102-104.

"Napoleon, it will be remembered, a few days before the capitulation of Ulm (1805) believed the Austrians to be in position on the Iller, with their left on the Danube. Against this line the Emperor proposed to employ Ney, Lannes, and Marmont frontally, while Soult's 4th Corps, from Landsberg, was to make itself master of Memmingen, and thence to descend the left bank of the Iller and roll up the Austrian right wing. This movement was never executed, because the Austrian commander took refuge with his army in the fortress of Ulm; but it would have succeeded if Mack had kept to his original intention of defending the lower Iller, facing eastward.

"On the 29th September, 1806, Napoleon wrote to Marshal Soult to warn him of the manœuvre which he might have to make by Hof, in case the enemy stood in position near Schleiz to oppose the passage of the centre column of the Grand Army.

"In April, 1809, the Emperor instructed Davout that if the Austrians attacked the line of the Lech with all their forces, his corps (3rd) was to debouch from the *tête-de-pont* of Ingolstadt and force the decision by attacking the enemy on his right flank and rear. Two months later Napoleon fixed and pinned the Austrian Army on the left bank of the Danube near Vienna, by occupying the island of Lobau and collecting in that island bridging material in such quantity that the Archduke Charles had daily to expect an attack on his own bank of the river.

"In June, 1812, Napoleon hoped that the Russians would remain in position behind the Nieman from Kovno to Grodno. His manœuvre was essentially to demonstrate against the Russian front with his right and then his centre, while the powerful mass of his left wing was to cross by surprise below Kovno, roll up the enemy's right, and so open the way over the Nieman for the groups of the centre and right wing.

"In February, 1813, Prince Eugene received from the Emperor a remarkable, though belated project of operations, according to which the majority of the French forces were to have been concentrated on the right bank of the Elbe, near Magdeburg, the upper course of that river being held but weakly. The continual menace of the 'mass of manœuvre' would force the enemy to march and countermarch, and in any case would compel them to give up the idea of crossing the Elbe before fighting a battle between Magdeburg and Dresden."



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE: THEIR LIMITATIONS.

WHEN Clausewitz has exhausted his theory of the Defensive, several chapters of his treatise in regard to which at times inevitable form of strategy we have translated or paraphrased, he proposes to deal with the Offensive. Book VII. begins with a philosophical discourse on the relations between the offensive and the defensive, which proves, to put it shortly, that in war it would be useless to discuss systems of defence if no one ever assumed the offensive, and also that the talk of the offensive would be a very simple matter if the defensive were never in earnest. He therefore concludes that a mastery of defensive strategy implies a very clear knowledge of offensive strategy, and that the man who would succeed in an offensive campaign must have thoroughly well grasped the principles on which generals who must adopt defensive strategy and tactics draw their schemes. But the manner in which a simple truth like this can be obscured, may be illustrated by one sentence from the text as translated by Colonel Graham, vol. iii., book xii., chap. i. p. 1. The oracles of Delphi were easy of comprehension compared with a passage like this.

"We have no intention, nor would it be consistent with the nature of the thing, to adopt the usual plan of works on engineering, and in treating of the attack to circumvent it or upset all that we have found of positive value in the defence by showing that against every means of defence there is an infallible method of attack. The defence has its strong and weak ones; if the first are not insurmountable, still they can only be overcome at a disproportionate price, and that must remain true from whatever point of view we look at it, or we get involved in a contradiction. Further, it is not our intention thoroughly to review the reciprocal action of the means."

No wonder that a very able German officer, who was on a visit to us, and whom we asked to help in this translation of the 'Art of War,' said he would prefer three months of manoeuvres in winter without any cantonments, or even a residence in Holloway for six weeks along with logistic suffragettes. We therefore take it for granted that very probably the offensive will be met by a



defensive, either in front, as at Torres Vedras, or Fredericksburg, or Cold Harbour, or Liao Yang, or at Le Mans, or on the Lisaine; or on a flank as Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, Vicksburg, Metz, Plevna; or *en tenaille*, i.e. in front and flank as would now be the case of a German offensive to-day on the line Strasbourg, Nancy, Toul-Paris. However, before continuing our own translation, we give another quotation from a literal rendering of our master. He is dealing with the strategical principle which we have often considered in various treatises, and which both Napier and Vial treat so clearly in connection with that magnificent display of strategy *in excelsis*, Wellington's operations against Masséna, Portugal, 1810-11, to wit, that a passive defensive is of so little use that a general who resorts to it might as well give up at once, as he is bound to be beaten. Indeed, Osman's splendid defence of Plevna failed because of its passive character; had he counter-stroked vigorously, very probably the Russians would have given up the invasion of Turkey, 1877. So Lee is blamed for a too passive resistance to Grant's strategy of attrition, May to June, 1864. Had he fallen on Grant during one of his flank marches, say after Spotsylvania, it would probably had been better for the Confederate cause. We quote a sentence from General Graham's translation, published 1873, of which a new edition has been issued since we began this work, under the direction of Colonel Maude.

"We have seen that the Defensive in War (*generally also, therefore, the strategic defensive*) is no absolute state of expectancy, and warding off therefore no completely passive state, but that it is a relative state, and therefore more or less impregnated with offensive principles. In the same way, the offensive is no homogeneous whole, but incessantly mixed up with the defensive. But there is this difference between the two—that a defensive without an offensive return blow cannot be conceived; that the return blow is a necessary constituted part of the defensive, whilst in the attack the blow or act is in itself one complete idea. The defence in itself is not necessarily a part of the attack, but the time and space to which it is inseparably bound impart unto it the defensive as a necessary evil. For in the *first* place the attack cannot be followed up uninterruptedly to its conclusion, it must have stages of rest, and in these stages when its action is neutralised, the state of defence steps in of itself; in the *second* place, the space which a military force in its advance leaves behind it, and which is essential to its existence, cannot always be covered by the attack itself, but must be specially protected."

An invader, in short, must always be on the defensive, if against nothing else, against raids on his lines of communications; thus the Germans were obliged to defend Nancy-Paris railway by as many men as Napoleon led

across the Rhine to the conquest of Germany in 1805. Lord Kitchener's block-houses and other defensive precautions are still in the minds of thousands of our readers. Did they not occupy the attention of a very great part of our Militia force? They will also soon be curious to know what the new "Special Reserve," if it ever has a *local habitation* and an aim as well as a name, would do under similar circumstances?

Our sage goes on to say—

An original aim and principle of death is inherent in every offensive scheme, it soon begins to suffer from detachments, covering details in flanks, and inertia replaces energy.

This Hamley proves clearly and simply: The initiative and moral elements are all with the offensive at the start, but as it advances it "drags with each remove a lengthening chain," and as the war is lengthened out, as in Spain, 1808-13, in Russia, 1812, and in Virginia, 1862-65, the invader risks ruin, unless, as was the case with the Federals, they have enormous resources over their opponents in wealth and numbers, and are endowed with equal fixity of purpose. Hamley says: "The strategical advantages and disadvantages which attach respectively to offensive and defensive warfare mainly depend on the questions of magazines and lines communicating with them. The offensive confers at the outset the power of concentration on the flank or centre of the enemy's line of defence and so turning or breaking it. The defender must either oppose the enemy with a considerable force at first or abandon territory in order to assemble his forces at some point further back. On the other hand, offensive war demands great resources, and success itself, if not absolute and decisive, entails fresh difficulties on the invader. And when he has penetrated far within the defender's territory, the situations of the antagonists differ greatly, inasmuch as the army on the offensive is bound to its base, be that base wide or narrow, while the defensive forces may base themselves on any part of their territory which will supply them and which their front protects."

When the offensive is reduced to the defensive the chance of success shifts to the defensive, even as in a law case when the defensive has made out a plausible case the *onus probandi* shifts from the defendant to the prosecutor.

What a difference presents itself during the hours of repose which succeed the work of the fighting day, between the position of the defender who rests in positions which he knows thoroughly and which he has carefully prepared in advance, and that of the attacker, who is obliged to get a *bivouac* which he reaches by groping in the dark almost like a blind man. But after a battle there is a greater difference still, when it becomes necessary for the attack to rearrange its line of communications, provide for food from distant sources of supply, and hurry up reinforcements; whereas the defender finds himself close to his fortresses and his

magazines and is settled in his own land, while the invader is like a bird poised and speculating on the branch of a tree.

The defender is always at home, he can change his base in any direction which pleases him, whereas, before very long, circumstances must arise from some cause or another which reduces the invader to the defensive, and these circumstances are most injurious to him, especially if he has not yet managed to crush the forces of the enemy in the field.

It is certain that the defensive action of the invader is independent of his attack properly so-called, but it is also quite clear that these circumstances must react on the attack, and of necessity diminish its effective strength. Thus every attack carries within it elements which may reduce it to a defensive, and the invader should always take these conditions into his most careful consideration and prepare means for diminishing their injurious influence.

We always take too little heed of the contingencies which may retard the operations of our generals ; our politicians are impatient of delay, and when our offensive changes into a defensive, because no precautions were taken or means provided for our generals, there is a clamour against generals. Bitter contumely assailed Moore in 1808, and Wellington in 1810 and 1812 for their retreats, *i.e.* for being compelled to change an offensive into a defensive. McClellan and Burnside felt the evil force of the same spirit of captious ignorance and political folly. Sir Redvers Buller has passed away, I am now proud to be able to say that I took no part in the clamour against him, and I remember with gratitude the fact that the UNITED SERVICE MAGAZINE frequently allowed me to speak a word in his favour. Neither he nor Lord Methuen had the means of success at the beginning of the war of 1899, and I know, as I saw the documents, that Buller warned the Government that they were risking loss of initiative and being reduced to a weak defence by neglecting to prepare for the inevitable in accordance with our text. As to the defensive being always at home and thus at signal advantage as compared with the assailant, compare Napoleon against the Allies in 1814. He assailed them in two months from at least six different points of the compass, while they could only move on almost straight lines from east to west up to March 14.

My attempts to put Napoleon's lines of communications on a black-board produced an extraordinary mathematical figure, which I was never able to get an engraver to reproduce. So in 1870-71, after Sedan, the German line of operations to Paris was east to west, but it was attacked by sorties from Paris and from Belfort, and Dijon, and Chatillon, and Orleans, and le Mans, and Rouen, and Amiens, and St. Quentin.

The defence, then, has different choices of procedure and of lines of operations, and these increase or diminish as it makes more or less use of its own resources and of the principle of waiting for the development of the invasion and thus can modify in every particular its active enterprises. But the invasion is limited by its very nature to one active principle of advance and attack. All defensive operations are a dead weight on the progress. Of course there may be very great differences in the energy of the attack, and in the rapidity and the energy of his assaults.

The same methods are not employed by a Ney and a Massena, by a Suwarrow and a Schwartzenberg, by a McClellan and a Sherman.

But these differences are differences of method and not differences of principle.

Of course an invader may resort to the defensive occasionally in order to arrive more safely at his object ; for example, when he takes up a defensive position and allows himself to be attacked. But these rare cases do not deduct anything from the value of the lessons of experience, and from the general mass of the rules and of the deductions from historical illustrations.

For example, the Germans during the siege of Paris received attacks on the Loire and the Lisaine, but their object was to take Paris and they had not any desire to push too far into the country. Had they gone too far south and north of their main line of operations, they would have forgotten the principle of maximum and minimum radii of operations.

There can be no such variation and gradation in the methods of the offensive, which the great variety of its choice of operations and schemes admit to the defensive. The operations of the invader are limited, as a rule, by the numbers of his armed forces, and by the fortresses which he preserves in the vicinity of the invaded territory. Fortresses thus situated are at first of much value, but in proportion to the advance of the invader their importance decreases, and they can never exercise any decisive influence on the issue of the war. Whereas strong places can aid the defensive and prolong the war, especially if they be entrenched camps with enormous supplies of provisions and ammunition.

The invaded people, however discontented with their Government, seldom aid the invader.

Not in Spain, not in France, even before the fall of the Empire, and scarcely to any appreciable extent in Ireland, 1798. The English and Royalist invasion of France, 1793-95, in aid of Royalists against the Republic—*e.g.* the Quiberon expedition—were ghastly failures.

Alliances are of very little use to invaders, they are only the result of fortuitous and temporary interests, and hence discordant views soon begin to interfere with strategical schemes ; but defensive alliances are based on general interests and on the natural order of things, such as a sense of common danger. We can, therefore, in our theories as to the strategy of attack, reckon upon fortresses, national risings and alliances as all likely to be in favour of a prolonged and able defensive system ; but the offensive, and especially an invader, is seldom justified in relying on any of these aids.

#### THE OBJECTIVE OF OFFENSIVE STRATEGY.

Both in defensive and in offensive strategy to destroy the enemy's strength is the object, and to defeat thoroughly beyond hope of recovery his military forces, is the means.

Captain Mahan says very well, "In the matter of preparation for war one clear idea should be absorbed first by every one who, recognising that war is still a possibility, desires to see his country ready. This idea is that, however defensive in origin or in political character a war may be, the assumption of a simple defensive in war is ruin. War once declared must be waged offensively, aggressively. The enemy must not be fended off, but smitten down. You may then spare him every exertion, relinquish every gain. *But till down* he must be struck incessantly and remorselessly" ('The Interest of America in Sea Power').

By destroying the armed forces of the enemy the defensive can turn to the defensive-offensive, and the invader conquers the hostile country. Conquest is the object of the invader, whether the capture of all or only part of the enemy's territory is desired, or only one district, or one strong place. Whether a large or small portion of the territory is conquered, each portion has some value either for retention or exchange at the conclusion of the peace. The object of offensive strategy is of various degrees of significance, from the acquisition of an entire country to that of the most trifling fortress. Once the object is attained the offensive ceases and becomes defensive. It is a mistake to regard

the attack as a strictly defined unit. In practice, the moment when the offensive becomes defensive is quite as uncertain as is the moment when the defensive can assume the offensive.

The general does not always clearly lay down in advance the limits of the conquest at which he aims. He leaves this to be settled by events. Ambition develops with success. His offensive leads him much further than he ever expected to be able to go. The resistance of the enemy may be much less effective than he had any reason to expect.

Fortune may favour him in a most unexpected fashion, as it favoured the Germans in 1870, and the Japanese, 1904.

Sometimes too, after a pause, more or less long, the increase of his forces may enable him to renew his advance.

As was the case with Napoleon after his check at Eylau, February, 1807.

All through he cannot exactly distinguish between the renewed movement and his original purpose.

But, on the other hand, he may suspend his advance much sooner than he originally expected without at the same time giving up the offensive.

Wellington was very much under the influence of vicissitudes, 1811-13. In short, the defensive once it is successful becomes offensive. As with Wellington in 1810-11.

So the offensive may be obliged to adopt the defensive.

As with the Allies in 1814, and Napoleon in 1815, and Jourdan and Moreau in 1796.

All these considerations may appear obvious enough, but unless the reader keeps them in his memory, he will not be able to appreciate any of the principles of strategical offensive, and the study of campaigns will be of little practical service to him.

I always had a high admiration for General William Tecumseh Sherman. I do not think he was very familiar with the writings of Clausewitz, but he had no doubt of the necessity for securing victory of an overwhelming character by as rapid, and decisive, and overpowering methods as possible. I quote some phrases from his reply to the Mayor and Councillors of Atlanta, who desired him to allow citizens, especially women, to remain in that town during the victorious march through Georgia.



"My orders are not designed to meet the humanities of the case, but to prepare for the future struggle in which millions of good people outside of Atlanta have an interest; we must have peace, not only in Atlanta but in all America. . . . To secure this we must stop the war that now desolates our once happy and favoured country. . . . To stop the war we must defeat the rebel armies. . . . To defeat these armies we must prepare the means to reach them in their recesses, provided with the arms and instruments which enable us to accomplish our purpose. . . . I assert that my military plan makes it necessary for the inhabitants to go away, and I can only renew my offer of services to make their exodus in any direction as easy as possible. . . . War is cruelty and you cannot refine it. . . . You might as well appeal against a thunderstorm as appeal against the terrible hardships of war. They are inevitable, and the only way the people of Atlanta can hope once more to live in peace and quietude at home is to stop this war. . . . When that peace does come you may, remember, call upon me for anything. I will share with you my last cracker, but now you must go and take with you the old and the feeble." Then the resolute and wise general paraphrased Clausewitz in deeds as well as in words of the most singular and successful significance, followed by one of the most remorseless marches in history through Georgia to the Carolinas.

Marshal Saxe calculated that in his time the invader's force diminished in strength in six months from a third to a half.

The enormous diminution in the absolute force of the invader available for shock very soon after the first decisive combat is one of the most important subjects of strategical consideration. The probable extent of this depreciation of force must always be well studied in advance and precautions taken accordingly. The causes of this decrease in strength, however, are very simple and obvious.

I. The necessity for effective occupation of the hostile territory.

*E.g.* the Germans, though their stay in France was short, had taken steps for the effective government of the country through which they advanced.

II. The necessity for an attacking army to occupy the country in its rear to secure its lines of communication and its service of subsistence.

III. The loss by wounds and disease.

IV. The ever increasing distances of its depôts, magazines, etc.

V. Investments and sieges of strong places.

VI. The diminution of energy on the part of the troops.

*E.g.* the Germans were getting very weary of the war after the siege of Paris. Home-sickness and disgust at the monotony of encamping and marches soon begin to be felt; soldiers accustomed to town life become utterly worn out with war, in their minds as well as their bodies.



VII. The defection of allies.

More than half of the Allies of the first coalition against France, 1793, dropped out of the war in 1795, and Austria made peace in 1797, leaving England practically alone.

But some other circumstance may tend to counterbalance this diminution of force ; for example, the waste of the defenders' forces may, though this is seldom the case, exceed the losses of the invader. This also must be a matter for consideration.

The losses of Lee's army in the campaigns Wilderness to Cold Harbour, though not comparable to those of Grant, were nevertheless greater in proportion to the Confederate forces, and therefore were severely felt.

We must also calculate, not on the total amount of the forces mobilised, but those available in first line or at important points. Good examples for study would be the French in 1805-9, between Ulm and Vienna and Austerlitz and Wagram, and in Prussia, 1806, and in Russia, 1812.

The French in Spain, 1808-13, when, though there came 300,000 Imperial troops to the Peninsula, three complete Army Corps were seldom available against Wellington. In 1862-63, the Federals scattered their troops over an enormous theatre of operations in a most wasteful and disconnected manner, whereas the Confederates on the inner line could always bring a sufficient force to a decisive point. Grant's plan for 1864 was an improvement by way of concentration, but even so there was an unnecessary and unscientific dispersion of force.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ULTIMATE LIMIT OF THE OFFENSIVE.

THE success of the offensive depends on the superiority of its physical and moral forces over those of the defensive. Though the forces of the attack, as we have seen, must diminish, yet they must also continue superior to those of the defence till the end. The attack must pay ready coin for every pledge which it secures which may be of any value when negotiations for peace begin ; it can only attain its end if in spite of every cause of weakness it can preserve till the conclusion of peace its superiority over the forces of the defence. There are strategical attacks which result directly in peace, but these are rare, and as a rule an extreme point where its forces are just sufficient to maintain themselves in a defensive attitude awaiting the conclusion of peace. Beyond that point a reaction begins, and its violence may be much stronger than the invader's blow. This point is the limit of the attack. To go further is to risk disaster. Generals, like other men, must not become inebriated with victory. But as the object of the attack is the conquest of the enemy, the attack should not cease till its supremacy is exhausted. That consideration necessarily pushes it towards its end, but it is easy to go too far. When we reflect on the great number and variety of the conditions which must enter into a calculation of the strength of the rival forces at a given point, it is often extremely difficult to judge whether there is a superiority on either side, and if so which side. All depends on the perspicuity and clearness of view—finesse—of the calculations of the strategist.

It is manifestly one of the duties of the brains of an army to make accurate estimates on such points. Ought Napoleon to have made peace after Montmorail, 1814 ? Was Jackson wise in holding on to the Shenandoah Valley in 1862 ? Ought Lee to have pursued after Fredericksburg ? Was Sherman very rash in advancing without a base in 1864 ? Should Soult have abandoned Andalusia in

1812? Ought Wellington to have advanced on Burgos after Salamanca, 1812? Should the French have made peace after Sedan? There are many other very interesting historical problems which have depended on these considerations.

### THE LIMIT POINT OF VICTORY. WHEN TO STOP.

There are wars in which an attack is not able to crush the defence completely.

For example, in Russia, 1812. Napoleon against Austria, 1797, when he was very glad indeed to make the peace of Campo Formio. The Japanese could not have followed Kuropatkin beyond the Amur. Jackson would have made a mistake if he had followed Banks north of the Potomac after the victory at Winchester in 1862. Napoleon was glad enough to make the peace of Tilsit after Friedland, 1807.

This can be easily established from a mass of facts, but it has a very important bearing, not only on the art of war, but also in the elaboration of plans of campaign. But it is not by any means so easy of comprehension as might be supposed. Victory is the result of the preponderance of a mass of physical forces and moral forces, and manifestly the victory itself materially increases the preponderance of the force of the victors.

During the development of the art of war the armies on each side constantly encounter conditions which increase their force.

It is a question of more or less. Every diminution of force on one side means practically an increase of the forces of the other side. This flux and reflux of force is apparently equal in the advancing and in the retreating army.

The causes of these relative modifications are as follows: and I may say that British military history justifies Clausewitz in his insistence on a most careful study at great length of all these conditions, especially by all responsible politicians. The next K.C. who proposes to become a Chief of the Admiralty or of the War Office had better go to some military chambers, even as he went to some special pleader's chambers, and devote a year to exhaustive inquiry into the principles of success or failure in war, before taking a large salary for "the conduct of war."

### THE CAUSES OF THE INCREASE IN THE FIGHTING POWER OF THE ADVANCE

Are:—1. The fact that the losses of his enemy during a retreat are as a rule much greater than his own during the advance.

2. The parks, magazines, depôts, bridges and such-like which

the retreating enemy leaves behind him are terrible losses, which he cannot hope to make good without a long delay.

The loss of Marmont's pontoons hampered his movements very much in 1812.

3. He loses provinces from which he draws recruits and supplies.

4. The invader can to some extent live on the country and at the expense of the invaded.

5. Perplexity and confusion by reason of the dislocation of the defender's plans and of the national life upset all the interior administration of the country and disturb in every way the efficient working of its administrative departments.

6. The defection of the defender's allies and on the invader's side the adhesion of allies.

#### SKILFUL MARCH TO, AND CAPTURE OF, AN OBJECTIVE.

The first objective of General W. S. Sherman's celebrated march through Georgia was Savannah. He rode into this city the 22nd December.

Immediately on his arrival, Sherman despatched the following brief note to President Lincoln, announcing this happy termination of the campaign :—

"I beg to present to you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton."

The number of artillery captured, as subsequently ascertained by actual inspection and count, was one hundred and sixty-seven. Thus, as the result of this great campaign, was gained the possession of what had from the outset been its chief objective. Its present value was mainly as a base for future operations. The army marched over three hundred miles in twenty-four days, directly through the heart of Georgia, and reached the sea with its subsistence trains almost unbroken. In the entire command, five officers and fifty-eight men were killed, thirteen officers and two hundred and thirty-two men were wounded, and one officer and two hundred and fifty-eight men missing ; making a total list of casualties of but nineteen commissioned officers and five hundred and forty-eight enlisted men, or five hundred and sixty-seven of all ranks. Seventy-seven officers, and twelve hundred and sixty-one men of the Confederate army, or thirteen hundred and thirty-eight in all, were made prisoners. Ten thousand negroes left the plantations of their former masters and accompanied the column when it reached Savannah, without taking note of thousands more who joined the army, but from various causes had to leave it at different points. Over twenty thousand bales of cotton were burned, besides the twenty-five thousand captured at Savannah. Thirteen thousand head of beef-cattle, nine

million five hundred thousand pounds of corn, and ten million five hundred thousand pounds of fodder, were taken from the country and issued to the troops and animals. The men lived mainly on the sheep, hogs, turkeys, geese, chickens, sweet potatoes, and rice, gathered by the foragers from the plantations along the route of each day's march. Sixty thousand men, taking merely of the surplus which fell in their way as they marched on the main roads, subsisted for three weeks in the country.

On the other hand, the *causes of the enfeeblement of the attacking force* as it advances are :—

1. As the enemy retires he calls up to his main body all the detachments by which he has hitherto diminished the mass of his forces in observing or besieging the fortresses of the attack, or protecting his own near the frontier ; whilst for the future the attack is obliged to detach troops for the same purposes exactly in proportion to the territory which he is able to traverse.

2. Once the adversary's territory is penetrated, the whole situation changes, and the people of the theatre of war, before friendly, become hostile. We must occupy the theatre thoroughly if we wish to be its masters, and yet in every direction the attacker at the same time is opposed by obstacles and adverse circumstances which diminish both his numbers and their efficiency.

3. The attacker is going further from his resources every day, while the defender is going back on to his. Hence he cannot repair his losses as quickly as the latter.

4. The danger in which the invader's forward march places the invaded state awakens the solicitude of its neighbours, who are interested in preserving its independent existence and strength, and they may come to its aid.

This idea of course was one of the principal bases of the Policy of Balance of Power, which influenced all European international relations 1648 to 1793. See Burke's splendid exposition of this theory and of its supersession by the French Revolutionists in 'Letters on a Regicide Peace.'

5. In fine, the vigour of the attack gradually diminishes. While the adversary is encouraged to redouble his efforts.

Every defender of his country has the moral support and active encouragement of the people of the neighbourhood, and is warmly welcomed by the women. Of course the invader is heartily cursed or coolly ignored. The Austrian soldiers of occupation in Italy were "cut" by the Italians in peace time ; and at New Orleans, 1862, the Federals were so badly received by

the women that Butler issued an insulting order against these. It is curious how even in the bravest armies the vigour of the attack diminishes. Thus all observers admit that after May, 1864, Grant's troops never again displayed the same zeal and desperation in front attacks.

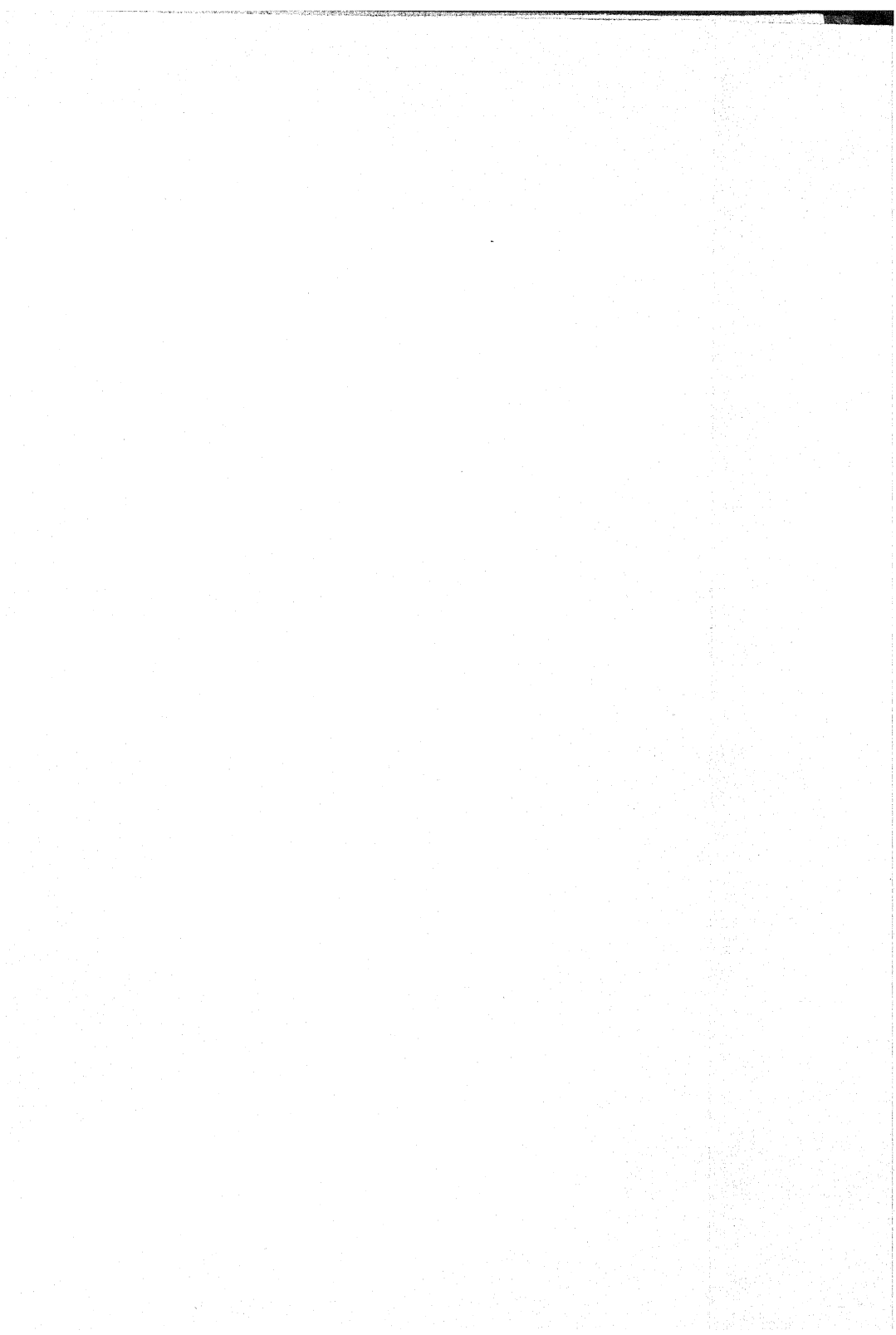
Most of these influences often act and react on each other in an apparently contradictory way. But there can be no question about the effect of the last. This is particularly felt after a victory, according as the success of the attack is so complete as practically to paralyse the energy of the vanquished, or so slight as to really encourage them to hope for ultimate success.

#### WHEN TO STOP. EITHER ADVANCE OR RETREAT.

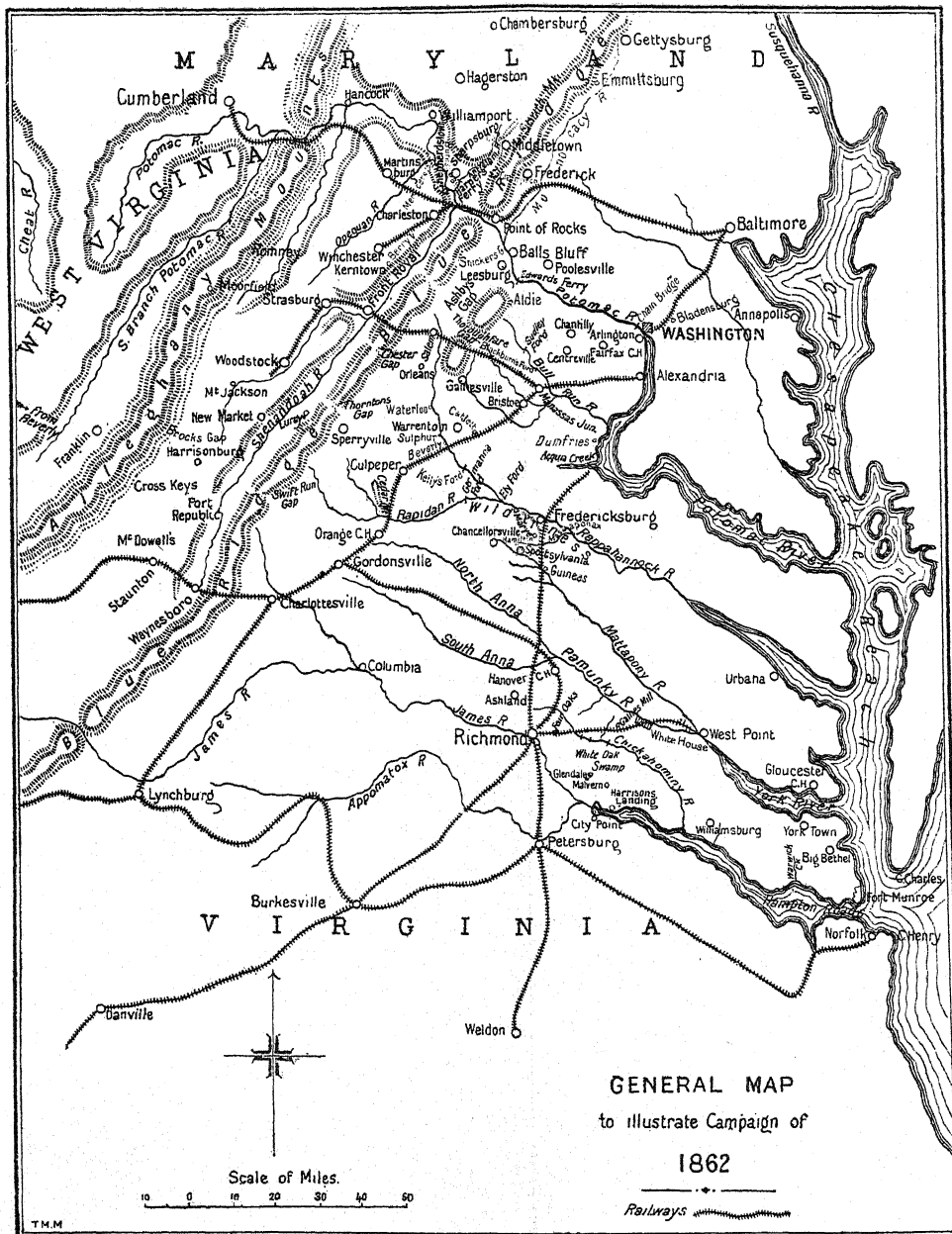
I have not space to follow Clausewitz fully in his very able if too philosophical exposition of the doctrine that ability to appreciate when the culminating point of an attack is reached is one of the chief points of wisdom in a general. Napoleon went too far when he attacked at Laon, 1814. Moore knew exactly how far to go when he marched north of the Douro towards the Carrion, 1808, having meanwhile changed his base from Ciudad Rodrigo to Corunna. Joseph was altogether too hasty when he evacuated Madrid after Salamanca, 1812.

The Archduke Charles stopped retiring and Moreau retired at the proper moment, 1796. Benningsen very skilfully calculated the extent of his retirement and the proper moment to renew operations on the offensive, 1806. Palikao ordered a most unfortunate assumption of a forward movement by MacMahon, August, 1870. Von Werder, in the Vosges and Jura districts, knew exactly when to retreat and when to advance in November to January, 1870-71. Lee and Jackson timed their advances and retirements with rare sagacity, 1861-63. I could multiply examples indefinitely, but I have given enough; moreover young students can be well employed in seeking for examples for themselves. A study of the writings of the American military historian Dodge would supply them with plenty of illustrations of all our theories. So would Napier or Alison or Livy or Thucydides or Arrian or Polybius. They would be as well employed reading these, as looking at cricketers with their hands in their pockets and cigarettes in their mouths, or roaring applause at the victories of hireling horse-riders; or pretending to be at Olympic games and at Marathon!

Not even the Surprise of a Great State by overwhelming forces need produce more than a temporary depression. We have seen that the invader soon begins to feel that all successful invasions are very like Pyrrhic victories, provided that the breed and disposition of the invaded race be stout and warlike. The Archduke Charles, with whose campaigns our author was familiar, says, "that all a great monarchy requires is time to develop its resources." Let the defenders hold out, and their resources grow from day to day, and if they are organised and drilled as soldiers in peace time and have military habits and can use







weapons and their territory is extensive, they can turn and rend the invader even as the Russians turned on Napoleon in 1812. Clausewitz was a witness of and a partaker in the War of Liberation which followed the retreat from Moscow, and he also watched Napoleon's wonderful strategical counterstrokes on the Allies in Champagne, after they had crossed the Rhine, the Moselle and the Meuse, so his observations in this branch of the higher art of war are really very profitable to students.

In physics a force of which the action continues and which is capable of stopping a body in movement produces that effect only gradually, and cannot stop it unless a certain amount of time is available. In many circumstances the intellectual world is subject to laws similar to those of the physical world. When a man has entered with determination upon a fixed course of action, no merely ordinary or trifling motive will either arrest his career or divert him from his purpose. Time, calm reflection, and a series of successive and continuous checks are required before he gives up his plan. So it is in war. When on each side one has resolved to gain a definite object and the other to reach a place of safety, it is evident that the motives which induce the first to stop and the other to advance are not apparent at once, and that consequently either may be carried by his own impetus beyond the point of safety for the attack, or the point of safety for the retreat—one may easily advance further than is wise and the other may retreat further than is necessary. At times, in spite of the exhaustion of its physical force, and urged ahead by moral forces, the attack sees fewer dangers in continuing to move forward than in arresting its course.

Therefore we have proved that the attack may very well go on beyond the proper limits at which it should stand on the defensive, and present a firm countenance to the defensive and maintain its equilibrium. Therefore it is most desirable to try and ascertain in all campaigns this particular moment or limit, otherwise the attack may undertake too much and thus compromise itself, and the defence may be able to recognise and utilise this mistake if committed by the adversary.

Manifestly Grant's object, "crushing the enemy's forces in the field," was very slowly effected, May and June, 1864.

"The result of the battle of Cold Harbour, and the temper of the soldiery,

proved to General Grant that the attempt to force a way to Richmond by the destruction of Lee's army was completely unavailing. He could no longer, whilst operating on the north of the James River, execute a flank movement to turn his adversary's position; the assault by open force had failed; the plan of converging movements from the outer circumference of the circle had been thwarted; each successive column of invasion had been met by General Lee or his lieutenants, and not only had the cities of Richmond and Petersburg been preserved, but the main army had been retained almost intact. After many battles, and losses, of which few wars can afford a parallel, and which surpassed in number the whole strength of the enemy's force, General Grant had brought his army to a position which McClellan had reached with far greater ease and far less expenditure of life two years previously.

"Yet it would be wrong to suppose that the battles of the preceding month, even in their unprecedented and disproportionate slaughter among the Northern troops did not exercise an influence important and, in respect to the future of the war, not altogether adverse to the Federal cause. Although General Lee's army had suffered in a far less degree than its antagonist, it had lost heavily. At least 18,000 men had been put *hors-de-combat* since he had left his lines near Gordonsville, and behind this army was no rich and populous country, and no Europe from which fighting men could readily be obtained. Officers and men saw their ranks diminishing; they knew that, with the exception of the black population, few but women and children occupied the farms and plantations of Virginia and the Carolinas, and they regarded with a sort of despair the fresh legions which filled the gaps caused by those they had slain in the many battle-fields between Richmond and Washington.

"But notwithstanding this feeling, which seems to have existed, and to have been combined with the triumph of present success, in the ranks of the Confederate army, it must be a matter of doubt even among the warmest admirers of General Grant, whether the results obtained since the crossing of the Rapidan were at all commensurate with the losses incurred; whilst the unbiassed and impartial can have little hesitation in pronouncing the opinion that, had Lee been in possession of any force at all approaching in number that commanded by Grant, Washington and not Richmond would have been in danger."\*

The fact that the enemy's army in the field is the real object, is of course generally admitted, but was more clearly illustrated in the campaign of 1864-1865. Grant adopted the terrible and awfully costly strategy of attrition simply because he was separated from Richmond in 1864 (May), not by hills and rivers and forests and swamps, but by the depth of Lee's army. He could not surpass Lee in strategy or mobility. He therefore resolved to catch hold of that army, stick to it, and rub it out, even if attrition took him a year, cost 100,000 dead, and expended £300,000,000!

All that stood between Napoleon and the complete conquest of the Peninsula in 1810, was not the great rivers and sierras and fortresses of Spain, or the multitudinous bands of guerillas, but Wellington's army of about 40,000 highly

\* 'History of the American War,' Fletcher, vol. iii. pp. 245, 246.

trained soldiers, and Wellington's high capacity for command and skill in providing for the wants of his men. As long as Wellington could feed that army, he could prevent Spain from being conquered. He was the only man who could feed that army and manage the Mandarins and Prigs of the Spanish and Portuguese Governments.

The "Art of War" is principally the art of subsisting. Wellington had an army largely consisting of highly disciplined warriors. He managed to feed them on the whole well, and hence he drove all Napoleon's marshals before him from Torres Vedras over the Pyrenees.

I really believe that the criticisms by my late very able and clear-headed friend Colonel Henderson,\* are most valuable illustrations of the theory of Clausewitz.

### LEE'S INACTION AFTER VICTORIES, 1862-63.

"Victory does not consist in merely killing and maiming a few thousand men. This is the visible result ; it is the invisible that tells. The Army of the Potomac, when it retreated across the Rappahannock, was far stronger in mere numbers than the Army of Northern Virginia ; but in reality it was far weaker, for the *morale* of the survivors, and of the general who led them, was terribly affected. That of the Confederates, on the other hand, had been sensibly elevated, and it is *morale*, not numbers, which is the strength of armies. What, after all, was the loss of 12,200 soldiers to the Confederacy? In that first week of May there were probably 20,000 conscripts in different camps of instruction, more than enough to recruit the depleted regiments to full strength. Nor did the slaughter of Chancellorsville diminish to any appreciable degree the vast host of the Union.

"And yet the Army of the Potomac had lost more than all the efforts of the Government could replace. The Army of Virginia, on the other hand, had acquired a superiority of spirit which was ample compensation for the sacrifice which had been made. It is hardly too much to say that Lee's force had gained from the victory an increase of strength equivalent to a whole army corps of 30,000 men, while that of his opponent had been proportionately diminished. Why, then, was there no pursuit?

"It has been asserted that Lee was so crippled by his losses at Chancellorsville that he was unable to resume operations against Hooker for a whole month. This explanation of his inactivity can hardly be accepted.

"On 16th and 18th June, 1815, at Quatre-Bras and Waterloo, the Anglo-Dutch army, little larger than that of Northern Virginia, lost 17,000 men ; and yet on the 19th Wellington was marching in pursuit of the French ; nor did he halt till he arrived within sight of Paris. And on the 28th, 29th, and 30th August, 1862, at Groveton and the Second Manassas, Stonewall Jackson lost 4,000 officers and men, one-fifth of his force, but he was not left in the rear when Lee invaded Maryland. Moreover, after he had defeated Sedgwick, on the

\* 'Stonewall Jackson,' vol. ii. p. 576.

same night that Hooker was recrossing the Rappahannock, Lee was planning a final attack on the Federal entrenchments, and his disappointment was bitter when he learned that his enemy had escaped. If his men were capable of further efforts on the night of the 5th May, they were capable of them the next day; and it was neither the ravages of battle nor the disorganisation of the army that held the Confederates fast, but the deficiency of supplies, the damage done to the railways by Stoneman's horsemen, the weakness of the cavalry, and, principally, the hesitation of the Government. After the victory of Chancellorsville, strong hopes of peace were entertained in the South. Before Hooker advanced, a large section of the Northern Democrats, despairing of ultimate success, had once more raised the cry that immediate separation was better than a hopeless contest, involving such awful sacrifices, and it needed all Lincoln's strength to stem the tide of disaffection. The existence of this despondent feeling was well known to the Southern statesmen; and to such an extent did they count upon its growth and increase, that they overlooked altogether the importance of improving a victory, should the army be successful; so now, when the chance had come, they were neither ready to forward such an enterprise, nor could they make up their minds to depart from their passive attitude. But to postpone all idea of counterstroke until some indefinite period is as fatal in strategy as in tactics. By no means an uncommon policy, it has been responsible for the loss of a thousand opportunities.

"Had not politics intervened, a vigorous pursuit—not necessarily involving an immediate attack, but drawing Hooker, as Pope had been drawn in the preceding August, into an unfavourable situation before his army had had time to recover—would have probably been initiated. It may be questioned, however, whether General Lee, even when Longstreet and his divisions joined him, would have been so strong as he had been at the end of April. None felt more strongly than the Commander-in-Chief that the absence of Jackson was an irreparable misfortune."

### GOOD STRATEGY IS NOT GENIUS MERELY.

Brilliant strategical manœuvres, it cannot be too often repeated, are not a matter of inspiration and of decision on the spur of the moment. The problems presented by a theatre of war, with their many factors, are not to be solved except by a vigorous and sustained intellectual effort. "If," said Napoleon, "I always appear prepared, it is because, before entering on an undertaking I have meditated for long and have foreseen what may occur. It is not genius which reveals to me suddenly and secretly what I should do in circumstances unexpected by others; it is thought and meditation."

The proper objective, speaking in general terms, of all military operations is the main army of the enemy, for a campaign can never be brought to a successful conclusion until the hostile forces in the field have become demoralised by defeat; but, to ensure success, preponderance of numbers is usually essential and it may be said, therefore, that the proper objective is the enemy's main army when it is in inferior strength.

Under ordinary conditions, the first step, then, towards victory must be a movement, or a series of movements, which will compel the enemy to divide his forces, and put it out of his power to assemble even equal strength on the battlefield.

This entails a consideration of the strategic points upon the theatre of war, for it is by occupying or threatening some point which the enemy cannot afford to lose that he will be induced to disperse his army or to place himself in a position where he can be attacked at a disadvantage. While his main army, therefore, is the ultimate objective, certain strategic points become the initial objectives, to be occupied or threatened either by the main body or detached forces. It is seldom, however, that these initial objectives are readily discovered; and it is very often the case that even the ultimate objective may be obscured,



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE VITAL PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGY.

THE Commander-in-Chief must take into account a vast variety of elements in order to appreciate the situation before and after a great battle. He can only judge of the effective value of the most important of these determinative elements of the case from a crowd of considerations and relations apparently very loosely connected. In some sort the General requires a divining faculty. He must be able to decide whether the enemy will gather together more force and gain in cohesion after the first shock, or whether like the glass toy of Bologna its force may not dissolve into dust at a trifling pressure. He must divine what may be the moral effect which the exhaustion of certain resources, and the interruption of certain lines of communication, may produce on the military state of his adversary. He must be able to estimate how far the enemy may allow himself to be prostrated by a severe blow, or whether like a wounded bull he may not become more furious at each wound. He must also calculate what effect his victories or defeats may have on other Powers, and whether new alliances may be formed or old alliances broken up.

Gasca was a commander "who moved with deliberation, patiently, waiting his time, but when that came, bold, prompt, and decisive."

Archimadus said, "But we should always provide indeed against our adversaries, with the expectation of their planning well, and must not rest our hopes on the probability of their being blind, but on the belief of their own cautious forethought."

Brasidas is reported by Thucydides as saying to Clearides, "While the enemy are still unprepared and are thinking of retiring rather than remaining, while their minds are irresolute and before their plans are more definitely arranged, I will take my own division and surprise them if I can by falling at full speed in the centre of their forces."

Sir Henry Lawrence said, "With regard to our military policy in India



decisive and energetic measures never failed, though contrary causes have brought us very near desolation."

Clausewitz was accustomed to see an extraordinary succession of alliances against the French Revolution and the first Empire. These were largely financed by the British. But the attitude of Austria, Prussia and Russia was never stable. Prussia deserted the great coalitions several times, and Austria was very backward at entering into alliances and very ready to retire—e.g. 1812, 1814.

The extraordinary wide range of the precautions of Napoleon before entering into a campaign may be best studied in 1806—no element of possible uncertainty or complication escaped his notice. The same was to a less extent the case before he invaded Spain after the Peace of Tilsit. William the Third was also a great master of the strategy of alliances. But our modern politicians, under the antiquated brainless incubus of party faction rather than party properly so called, have lost the arts both of War and Diplomacy.

The Commander-in-Chief must be gifted with rare judgment, foresight and tact and imagination in order to be able to foresee the exact bearings of the thousands of varied conditions which surround him and might easily puzzle him; and even if he does not lose his way in the intricate labyrinth of difficulties in which he is placed, he may yet hesitate before the danger and responsibility of either pursuing or altering his course.

Thus it is that many generals are content with less than the complete achievements of their objects. They refrain from going so far as the utmost limit of safety. Their caution surpasses their enterprise. On the other hand, there are pushing and daring spirits who venture too far. He is the best who can secure great results with feeble means.

#### CRUSH THE ENEMY'S ARMY IN THE FIELD.

(Book vii. Chapter vi.)

We are now in a position to appreciate clearly the following motto of Clausewitz which brings the true objective of war, compared with which all other objectives are but secondary, clearly before us.

"The destruction of the armed forces of the enemy is the only method of attaining the ends of war."

*Vernichtung der feindlichen Streit Kräfte ist das Mittel zum Ziel.*

What do we mean by this phrase?

How can we attain this end?

Let us consider this axiom under its different aspects.

1. We can be content with a moderate success and only destroy such a proportion of the enemy's forces as may just serve our turn.

2. We can carry destruction to its extreme limits.

3. We can consider the preservation of our own forces as more important than the destruction of our enemy's forces.

4. We can even carry this principle of self-preservation so far that we will not attempt to destroy the enemy's forces except when a very favourable opportunity presents itself: indeed offensive strategy is sometimes confined to this object.

The battle alone can bring about in two different ways the destruction of the enemy's forces: first, directly; secondly, indirectly by a combination or series of battles with the same general end. Other valuable means are the capture of a great fortress and the occupation of defended territory; both are direct means of destruction and at the same time indirect, as they strike at the resources of the enemy, and once these first results are attained they can be used for further enterprises of destruction.

The occupation of undefended territory is also valuable, though no armed forces are destroyed in the process of occupation, as it tends to exhaust the enemy's recuperative energy. But all these means and successes are easily exaggerated to a decisive victory.

They are tempting because they cost our own army very little relatively. But they do not lead to decisive results, they only bring about false views of the situation, they are no more useful than merely fruitless victories without any serious consequences to the enemy.

1864.

There can be no question of the value of the truth set forth in this chapter. Forgetfulness of the fact that the true objective is not the occupation of territory but the destruction of the hostile army was largely responsible for the waste of time and money by the Federals. The real obstacle to the success of the Union armies was Lee's army. It stood between the enemy and Richmond and Petersburg, whose capture would end the war . . . hence the value of Grant's strategy in 1864. He recognised that if he could "rub" out Lee's army

by superior force, or by attrition as he called it, or by pounding away, the Union would win. The fact that Grant failed to crush Lee either at the Wilderness or Spotsylvania or Cold Harbour caused a change in his design, and he ordered Sheridan and Sherman to "rub" out the resources of the enemy by the occupation and ruin of the Shenandoah Valley and of Georgia, while he was obliged to draw out enormous lines of investment north and east, and gradually to work them south-west of Richmond and Petersburg. Yet the strategy of attrition was producing results even by the end of June, 1864.

## 1807.

Napoleon, like Clausewitz, had a very poor opinion of the value of great battles from which no decisive results followed. His experiences in Italy, Austria and Prussia of rapid and brilliant strategy followed by decisive battles which left the enemy powerless, were so uniform and elating that he was almost dismayed at the very small results of the tremendous efforts at Eylau. On the 8th February, 1807, both the French and Russian armies, each about 70,000 strong, were ready for a desperate struggle at Eylau.

Here took place the most terrible battle since Malplaquet. The corps of Angereau ceased to exist, the Emperor himself was only saved from the furious rush of the Russians by his personal guard *d'élite*; nor did the great masses of the cavalry charging again and again under Murat, Grouchy, Bessières, and Hautpool produce any serious impression on the stolid enemy. Both sides claimed the victory and both were exhausted, but manifestly at such a distance from his base, and with supplies depending on dubious allies, the position of Napoleon was hazardous to a degree. Both sides rested for four months. In the mean time Napoleon was successful in secondary operations, such as the sieges of a number of Prussian fortresses, the possession of which in no small degree conduced to his ultimate success at Friedland in June.

The whole idea of Moltke in the campaign of 1866, converging movements and all, had reference to a decisive battle; and hence, though he expected Benedek to fight behind the Elbe, he rejoiced to learn that the battlefield of the Austrians was to be in front of that river, and he hastened accordingly to attack their front and flank by a combined converging movement of his three armies before they could repair what he regarded as their blunder.

Philopoemen owed his success, according to Livy, to his having "formed his mind by perpetual meditation in time of peace as well as war till nothing could happen which he had not considered."

The Athenian Pericles commended in soldiers a mixture of caution with boldness in execution. He said, "We have this characteristic also in a remarkable degree, that we are at the same time most daring and most calculating in what we take in hand, whereas to other men it is ignorance that brings daring, while calculation brings fear."

In the Boer War, 1900-1, the destruction of the enemy's forces in the field should have been the main object rather than the possession of places. This is apparent from a study of Vol. III. of the official history.

During all these operations, the movements of the columns was greatly impeded by the operations of the enemy against the line of communications.

1899-1902.

Would it not have been in the long run more effective and quicker to have made the first object the destruction of Boer forces, rather than the occupation of places? The forces which moved from Bloemfontein towards Pretoria might very well, if this view had been taken, have been devoted in the first instance to the capture of the considerable Boer forces in the south-east of the Free State. If that had been done the advance on Pretoria need not have been interrupted, the communications would have been more secure, and Hunter's subsequent campaign in the Fouriesburg district would have been superfluous. The view which prevailed was that the occupation of Pretoria would lead to the break-up of the Boer Army, but in fact, though that army was dispersed, it was not destroyed, and was able to carry on an unusually prolonged guerilla warfare. But is it not probable that if from the beginning the leading idea had been to kill, wound, or capture as many of the Boer combatants as possible, the end of the war would have been attained much more rapidly?

A second question akin to the first, and arising from it, is whether it would not have been wiser at a very early stage in the war to have taken time to train for mounted work a much larger proportion of the Regular Infantry, and in this way to have attained as early as possible to something like a tactical equality with the enemy. These are subjects which sooner or later a critical review of the war will have to face. A comparison of the numbers of British and Boer troops in the whole theatre of war at any date after May, 1900, appears so discreditable to the tactical quality of the British troops, that it is impossible not to put the question whether the war might not have been concluded with a smaller force than was employed and in a shorter time than was required? That question can receive a convincing answer only from a close scrutiny both of the tactical and of the strategical methods employed.

*Repeated reflection on both subjects leads to the belief that the conduct of the operations on the British side suffered from a conception of war which exaggerated the importance of places and under-estimated the necessity of destroying the enemy's forces, while at the same time it shrunk from the sacrifices of life which are occasionally required when an offensive army is used as a weapon of destruction.*

It is well to see if the experiences of the Russians and Japanese in Manchuria confirm the views of Clausewitz as set forth in our last two articles.

I have had occasion to peruse most of what has been written about the war by able critics, and it is very clear that the old stories were retold in Manchuria. Indeed, the early part of the campaign against Russia resembled the campaign of 1894 against China in nearly every particular, except tenacity of fighting on the part of the defeated. The history of the war in the first year was very similar to the campaign of 1813 in Spain. That the Russians underrated the capacity for war of their opponents is no new thing. Our politicians were just as obstinate and foolish in 1899, and indeed our regular habit is blind self-confidence and security and insular conceit before a war begins, for all of which brainless luxury we have to pay severely in blood and treasure before the war is over.

The optimistic vote-catching speeches of ministers who declare that they know as little about war as "the man in the street," cost us far more than do the shells and swords of our adversaries. The incapacity of the Russian Court and politicians was set forth very clearly by the *Times* correspondent and other good authorities.

The value of numbers and of offensive strategy and its limitations of sea power, and of turning movements and of front attacks, and of lines of communications by rail, were all as clearly illustrated by the operations in Manchuria, 1904-5, as by the operations in France, 1870-1.

Since writing the above I find that quite an independant critic, Mr. Brookes Ball, takes precisely the same view as Clausewitz of the futility of any policy that cannot be supported by such an effective force as will wipe out the resistance of the enemy's army. All the present peace lullabies and conferences are mere twaddle. If Europe was silly enough to disarm, the Asiatics would arm and crush out its people at home and in the colonies in fifteen years.

Our English way is to give our confidence, on preconceived ideas, to "strong" and "safe" men. Sir Edward Grey's appointment was hailed on both sides as that of a "strong" and "safe" man. If no one else be satisfied, the "two front bench" men are. Whether the nation in the long run will see reason for satisfaction is more than doubtful.

The policy of irritating the Germans by weaving pack-thread agreements around them is scarcely likely to make for permanent peace—and displays little evidence of being either "safe" or "strong."

Jingoism and crowding to applaud contemptible plays are not strategy. It would be a sign of strength to imitate what is good in the German system, especially the cult of knowledge instead of games.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONCERNING THE GREATNESS OF THE OBJECT PROPOSED IN WAR AND THE EFFORTS NECESSARY FOR ITS ACCOMPLISH- MENT.

It seems to me that this chapter, which is mainly historical, is sufficiently interesting of itself, and is so clear that it will not require much elucidation or illustration by way of notes.

The amount of force and compulsion which we must apply to our enemy will depend on our political views and on his also. When each side is quite clear on these points, manifestly the amount of force to compel submission must be equal for either side. But this is by no means always the case, and hence one side may resolve to use up much more of its strength before yielding than the other side is prepared to use up. Another cause of the difference in the amount of force which each side will apply will arise from the fact that the two sides may not be equal in either position or in other conditions of success. Another cause is that Governments have not the same character, the same fitness for struggle, or the same strength of will.

These considerations produce no small amount of uncertainty as to the tenacity of the resistance which we may expect, and in settling upon the amount of means which we must employ, and indeed as to the object or end or limit of our operations. But in any case, as insufficient or half-hearted efforts in war never produce any definite result, and indeed generally result in waste of resources, the opposing parties are bound to try to gain an advantage such as may lead them to the extreme limit of endeavour, if politics do not apply some check and compel them to keep their expenses and the exhaustion of their means within the limit of what is just necessary for the acquisition of the proposed end or object of the war.



A State which enters upon a war may find itself so restricted and confined that, only working in some sort on direct and immediate principles, and in relation to its immediate wants, it abandons what at first appeared its necessary intention and only aims at some object corresponding with its political conditions, and employs only the amount of force necessary to secure that object.

In short, the fine genius and instructive tact of the commander must be able to appreciate to how much of his original intention he can adhere, and try to secure because of its immediate value, and what parts of his design he ought to give up because of their remoteness and relatively inferior importance.

Therefore in order to arrive at a proper calculation of the amount of national resources to devote to a given war, it is necessary to take into account political views, the geographical situation of the States, the revenues of the opposed States, the national character, the habitudes and characteristics of the Governments of the belligerents, and to compare all these great elements, without forgetting to allow for modifications in their relative strength which may result from alliances, and which unexpected circumstances may further affect during the progress of the war.

But no ordinary operations of a logical mind can possibly conduct to any true end calculations of which the data are so diverse and the conditions cross each other and intermix in such intricate fashion. Genius alone can manage to get at the concealed truth in such thick and complicated webs. Napoleon said that Newton would be puzzled at an algebraical problem of similar complexity.

But complications and difficulties which paralyse the activity and energy of an ordinary man, stimulate the genius of superior natures and give them wings to soar over an enormous mass of obstacles and perplexities.

In order to form any judgment as to the course of an approaching war, or the end to be pursued, and on the means to be employed, we must observe all the traits of the moment and all the existing conditions of all the parties and their allies. But this judgment can never be wholly accurate or exact, nor can any other appreciation of military probabilities, and all our calculations may be upset by the abilities, peculiarities, and caprices of princes, of statesmen



or of generals, whether these functions be united in the one man or dispersed among different personalities.

*E.g.* whether prime movers be absolute military rulers, or servants of a monarchy or of a democracy.

This subject becomes general and more easy to analyse in a practical fashion when we look at the relations between States and the conditions and fitness for war of States as established by time, traditions, and circumstance.

Let us therefore throw a rapid glance over the History of Wars.

#### THE TARTARS.

The half-civilised Tartars and the republics of the old world, the feudal lords, the commercial towns of the Middle Ages, the kings of the eighteenth century, and the princes and peoples of the nineteenth century, all made war in a fashion of their own and by diverse means pursued divers ends.

The Tartars emigrated in hordes, sometimes a whole tribe with their women and children, towards new regions. As to numbers, no other army could compare with them; their object was to chase off or destroy their adversaries. If they had been more civilised and better organised nothing could resist the resources at their disposal.

#### ANCIENT REPUBLICS.

With the exception of Rome the Ancient Republics were very small states, their armies were feeble because they excluded from the ranks the people at large. They were too small and too near each other, and the national equilibrium which is soon established between neighbouring States was a very great obstacle to far-reaching enterprises. Therefore they confined themselves in their campaigns to devastating the plains and to besieging some isolated towns which they desired to seize as useful for future operations or treaties.

#### ROMAN GREATNESS.

Rome carried on for centuries campaigns of this kind against its neighbours by feeble forces for booty or for allies, and became the only exception to their normal system and increased insensibly,

less by conquest properly so-called than by absorbing neighbours by treaties little by little. It was not till Italy was practically annexed that the Romans appeared on the scene as a conquering power. Carthage succumbed, Spain and Gaul were conquered, Greece submitted, and Rome was supreme in Asia and in Egypt. Its armies became enormous, but they required little sacrifice or self-denial. Its riches became enormous also, and supported every effort easily for centuries. No longer did it resemble either its old Italian adversaries or its former self.

Some of Clausewitz's remarks were anticipated by Bacon, whose 'Essay on the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates' contains the following profound reflections :—

"Romulus after his death, as they report or feign, sent a present to the Romans that they should intend and devote themselves to arms, and then they should prove the greatest Empire in the world. Never any State was in this point so open to receive strangers into their body as were the Romans. Therefore it happened to them accordingly, for they grew to the greatest monarchy. Their habit was to grant naturalisation not to singular persons alone, but likewise to whole families, yea to cities and sometimes to nations. Add to this, their custom of plantation of colonies, whereby the Roman plant was removed into the soil of other nations, and putting both constitutions together you will say that it was not the Romans that spread upon the world, but it was the world that spread upon the Romans and that was the sure way of greatness."

#### ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

The wars of Alexander were also unique in their way. At the head of a small army, but one that was perfect in every particular, he rushed like a hurricane on the vast continent of Asia which he traversed, overwhelming its old institutions as he advanced, and he reached India. In order to attain such a stupendous result in a few years a sovereign must organise, recruit, and direct his army himself, none of the ancient or modern republics could have carried out such an enterprise.

#### MEDIÆVAL ARMIES.

The monarchies of the Middle Ages, small and great, made war with the aid of the feudal military organisations. These armies were in the nature of confederacies formed by the union, partly compulsory and partly voluntary, of the contingents led by the great vassals of the Crown. Under these conditions the duration

of a campaign was very limited, and any enterprises which could not be completed in a very short period were regarded as impossible. The armaments and combats were based on main force, and on single combats, and unsuitable for large masses.

In a general way there were no ties of citizenship to loosen, and the individual warriors were more independent. War, therefore, took a special character. They were very rapidly conducted, there were few intervals of rest, and as there was not time enough to overwhelm the enemy and crush him out, the chiefs were content with chastising him and returning to their own homes having burned his castles and seized his cattle.

Such were the border wars between the English and Scotch for ages, and similar are the border wars on the Indian frontier to-day. A great proportion of the English operations during the so-called Hundred Years' War against the French were of this type.

#### THE CONDOTTIERI OR SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

The great commercial cities and the little republics of the Middle Ages had recourse to condottieri (soldiers of fortune), a very costly and hence limited kind of military organisation. What great efforts and what energy were expended on procuring soldiers of this type under such conditions! War became simply an expression of the hate or of the hostility with which the State was animated against its rival, and war became simply an enterprise paid for by the job, conducted by hired mercenaries from the wild spirits of every race, principally Swiss, Italian, English and Scotch.

As Dante says : "Pride makes the English and the Scotchman mad, so that they cannot stay at home and rest, but must wander forth, and fight and drink."

War, therefore, lost a great part of its original nature, and none of the old rules on which its conduct depended any longer applied. But gradually the feudal system was transformed into territorial domination, the bonds of the community were tightened, personal obligations to fight disappeared, and the rulers substituted contribution of taxes first in substance or kind and afterwards in money payments. Paid national troops began to replace feudal levies. It was really the condottieri who completed the transition

period. So that for a time their troops became the instruments of the great Powers. But this period of transition was short, and soon mercenaries, hired for a limited term of service, were replaced by soldiers regularly enrolled and paid.

#### NATIONAL STANDING ARMIES.

This was the origin of armies permanently maintained at the expense of the National Treasury. Many combinations of the three systems were to be found in the process of transformation, which was slow. In the wars of Henry IV. were to be found side by side feudal levies, condottieri, and permanent national troops. Indeed, condottieri, especially Scotch, were to be found in the Thirty Years' War, and feeble traces of the mercenaries were to be found in the wars of the eighteenth century (German, Swiss, Scotch and Irish). During these different epochs the interior arrangements and the political relations of the European States were not less peculiar than the system of military organisation. Europe was divided into a great number of petty States, turbulent republics or small monarchies, with no certain and no large organisation, of which each group, lacking real unity, was only an agglomeration of Powers without cohesion and with no common objects.

Compare the Holy Roman Empire or Germany from the death of Charlemagne till the accession of Charles V., and again in the seventeenth century, and till 1793; also Italy till 1866. France and England were united monarchies by the year 1485.

Under these conditions it was impossible to consider a State as having any directing intelligence capable of carrying out any design on any exact or well considered lines.

#### DEFECTIVE POLITICAL ORGANISATION.

We must consider all the wars of the Middle Ages from this point of view. The expeditions which the German Emperors sent into Italy for five centuries without being able to get dominion over that divided land, give us food for most instructive reflection. This waste of energy was due to a fault inherent in the whole political and military system of that epoch. As long as States are

trying to attain order after chaos, they devote their principal efforts and forces to the work of their concentration and to completing their unity. There are, therefore, few foreign wars, and these wars only serve to emphasise the failure of the States from the point of view of unity of action.

#### NATIONAL UNION—FRANCE.

Although France was still less a monarchy than a federation of Duchies and Earldoms, and although England, while much more united, was involved in frequent civil wars and made use of feudal levies, still, the wars between these two countries were the only regular series of campaigns which can be found in the history of the Middle Ages. Under Louis XI. France made great strides towards unity. Under Charles VIII. it appeared as a conquering Power in Italy; under Louis XIV. its State and its permanent army attained the highest degree of perfect organisation.

#### THE SPANISH EMPIRE.

The unity of Spain commenced under Ferdinand the Catholic. By most fortunate matrimonial alliances Charles V. united under his rule at the same time Spain, Burgundy (including the Low Countries), Germany and Italy.

That vast monarchy had little unity and less intrinsic cohesion, but it had enormous wealth, and its permanent army (which is highly extolled by Bacon) entered first into competition with that of France. After the abdication of Charles V. the Spanish Colossus sub-divided into two great families, Spain and Austria, and this latter soon afterwards was aggrandised by the acquisition of Bohemia and Hungary, and, drawing after its chariot's wheels the entire German confederacy, appeared on the scene as a very great Power.

And, though shorn of some of its strength by Frederick and Napoleon, it held a commanding position in Germany and Italy till 1866. Clausewitz omits to mention that Spain and Portugal owned practically the greater part of the North America and all South America till the epoch of the fall of Napoleon, and controlled Holland till the time of Elizabeth. Belgium, which had belonged to Burgundy and then to Charles V., went to Austria, which retained this "cock-pit of Europe" till the French Revolution.

ARMIES OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

The time of Louis XIV., at the end of the seventeenth century, ought to be regarded as the period when the standing armies attained the development which they preserved during the eighteenth century.

After the "new model" of Cromwell the Coldstream Guards was the first "new model" regiment to form the standing army, 1660, but its members rapidly increased till 1689, when a standing army was legalised by the Mutiny Act for one year, and put under military law. Our men were enlisted and paid, and otherwise remunerated in the seventeenth century, better, having regard to the standard of living in the community at large, than they are now.

Each State was a perfect unit; money payments definitely superseded personal service.

Feudal service was abolished in England in 1660, and excise substituted, much to the advantage of landlords.

Contributions in kind were abolished, and all the power of the State was concentrated in its financial system.

The Bank of England and National Debt were both organised in the reign of William III., during the Nine Years' War against Louis XIV.

Thus financial resources, under the influence of progressive administration and improvements of agriculture, were enormously increased. France had a standing army of 200,000 men, and the same relative numbers were maintained in every State, according to its population. England, in addition to its native-born soldiers, by a system of subsidies, kept large bodies of allies on foot, and absolutely bought mercenaries from Hessian and other German principalities. The foreign relations of States were also soon considerably modified. Europe only contained a dozen monarchies and two republics, and clearly any two of these States might fight it out without involving all the others in the struggle.

In point of fact, most States of Europe, outside Russia, were involved in the War of the Spanish and Austrian Succession; and in the Seven Years' War Russia was involved also as a belligerent.

Political complications, though numerous, were not too numerous to be considered in a comprehensive manner, and they could often be provided for in advance by ordinary foresight.



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This theory was well illustrated by the very elaborate precautions taken by Partition Treaties and otherwise for the future of the Spanish Empire, after the decease of Charles II., without a male heir.

With regard to their interior organisation most States were monarchical. The provincial assemblies having bit by bit lost their powers, the cabinet became a complete unit, and represented the State among foreign Powers. Therefore only an instrument of war fit for the purpose was required to enable any State to impress on any war a clear idea, aim, and end in accordance with pre-arranged schemes and definite objects.

### THREE NEW ALEXANDERS.

Three new Alexanders appeared (1618-1763), Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick the Great. Though only sovereigns of small states they disposed of armies whose admirable organisation and training more than compensated for the numerical weakness. Hence Gustavus Adolphus and Frederick the Great sought to found vast empires and overturn all opposition. If, like Alexander the Great, they had only to fight Asiatics they would have won successes equal to his. In regard to what a general of genius can dare to do in war, they may be regarded as the predecessors of Napoleon. But what the art of war gained in logical method and in strength, it lost in other directions.

### POLITICIANS AND PEOPLES.

With regard to the fashion in which peoples and national interests were treated by the professional politicians and diplomatists of the period, 1660-1815, Macaulay has some very striking remarks in his essay on the War of the Spanish Succession. I quote these remarks with the object of bringing Clausewitz's somewhat oracular pronouncements home to the minds of ordinary English readers.

"Lord Mahon speaks of the Second Partition Treaty, 1700, with grave severity. He calls it, 'an iniquitous compact, concluded without the slightest reference to the welfare of the States so readily parcelled and allotted; insulting to the pride of Spain, and tending to strip that country of its hard-won conquests.' The most serious part of this charge would apply to half the treaties which have been concluded in Europe quite as strongly as to the Partition Treaty. What regard was shown in the Treaty of the Pyrenees, 1659, to the welfare of the people of Dunkirk and Roussillon; in the Treaty of Nimègue to the welfare of the people of Franche Comté; in the treaty of Utrecht to the welfare of the people of Flanders; in the treaty of 1735 to the welfare of the



people of Tuscany? All Europe remembers, and our latest posterity will, we fear, have reason to remember how coolly, at the last great pacification of Christendom, 1815, the people of Poland, of Norway, of Belgium, and of Lombardy were allotted to masters whom they abhorred. The statesmen who negotiated the Partition Treaty were not so far beyond their age and ours in wisdom and virtue, as to trouble themselves much about the happiness of the people whom they were apportioning among foreign rulers."

I take it these remarks would equally apply to the preposterous Partitions of Africa and Asia, in 1880-1908. White and brown and black humanity have been regarded as mere counters for a far baser set of canting political and commercial knaves than any known in the eighteenth century. My readers will remember all the schemes for the spheres of influence in China, 1895-1903, and all the "open door" foolery; but Japan's successes have silenced all this nonsense, part of which can be found elaborated with great detail in the 'New Pacific' of that brilliant American, Pankhurst. But the very consummation of the impudence of International Policy is the Monroe Doctrine, which applies to all America from the 49 parallel northern latitude to Patagonia. It seems beyond credit, but I am informed by every able United States citizen of any rank whom I meet, that their people are resolved to fight *d'outrance* for that doctrine.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GOVERNMENTS STOOD APART FROM THE PEOPLE.

THE armies were maintained at the cost of the Treasury, which the Sovereign (on the Continent) considered, if not as his own private property, certainly that of the Government. In all diplomatic discussions outside some few commercial details the Cabinets considered very carefully their own political and financial interests and neglected those of the people at large. The Cabinets regarded themselves as proprietors or managers of large estates, the aggrandisement of which was their constant aim without any reflection on how far the taxpayers were likely to lose or gain by their operations. In short, the people were all in all during the migrations of the Tartars, and the richer middle class, if not the nation at large, took the greatest part in the management in the old republics and in the Middle Ages, but in the eighteenth century the only influence of the people at large in war depended on their military qualities or defects and taxable resources ; they had no part in the management of affairs.

Even the much vaunted British Constitution was a mere imposture ; the Parliament was for the most part in the hands of proprietors and borough-mongers, and the great majority of the adult citizens fit to bear arms had no votes. Many large towns had no representatives as late as 1815.

Thus the Government was a thing apart from the people, and the rulers were the State in their own opinion, and war became exclusively a thing for the Government. War was conducted with money collected from unwilling contributors, and the soldiers were vagabonds enrolled at home and in foreign countries.

Our standing army was procured by vile means ; its disgraceful discipline was either wild license (see Hogarth's 'March to Finchley'), or brutal cruelty. As

for the Prussian Army under the father of Frederick the Great, and indeed till Jena, see 'Macaulay's Essays.'

The means available were small, their value and their expansibility were easily calculated. Nothing was indeterminate or vague. The greatest terrors of war were suspended for a century. Surprises on a grand scale were impossible. No extreme courses and rapid rushes were conceivable.

All diplomatists were perfectly well informed as to the funds, the recruits, the credit of every State ; there was not the least chance of any grave blunders as to these conditions, and their sudden augmentation by any side during war was out of the question.

It was quite feasible to ascertain, not only the possible extent of one's own operations in a campaign, but all the resistance of which the adversary was capable. Extreme courses could not be taken by either side. The standing army was the only instrument of war, and monarchs handled their military forces with the utmost care.

The King of Prussia (Frederick's father) had such a splendid, and costly army, that he refrained from entering into the smallest war for fear he might lose a few of his gigantic human automata.

Outside the army, there was no safety for any monarch or State, there was nothing else, and once it was destroyed it could not be quickly replaced. Hence, all military enterprises were conducted with extreme caution ; the commander-in-chief only dealt with certainties. He would not advance far, or risk anything, unless he was almost certain of success. Till some good opportunity appeared likely to arise, the rival armies reposed, prudent and timid ; the offensive was in no hurry.

In Belgium, Marlborough advanced about sixty miles in five years. There were only about half a dozen battles of any consequence in the War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748, and not one of these had any decisive consequences.

England did great things by sea and in India and in the Colonies in the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763 ; but on the Continent, Frederick and his adversaries left off very nearly where they began, after a few bloody battles and an enormous amount of manœuvring. When a big battle took place the well-drilled soldiers fought hard, and the losses were heavy for the numbers engaged.

## War was a kind of gamble

(As Lord Tweedmouth called Mr. Haldane's Territorial Army Scheme)

in which time and chance shuffled the cards.

War was a kind of diplomacy, strengthened by soldiery ; a more energetic manner of negotiating battles and sieges replaced protocols for a while, and the most ambitious general was content with moderate successes, and was satisfied if he could enable his Government to resume negotiations for its original object with more chances of success. War was based on narrow principles, and hence its form was restrained and narrowed in its objects and its operations.

The reason why, under such circumstances, warrior kings like Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick, with small armies were not more successful, we must seek in the force of the political equilibrium or balance of power of Europe. All that immediate interests, neighbourhood, contact, family alliances and personal relations had formerly done, when Europe was divided into a vast number of little States, to prevent any one of them from becoming too strong at the expense of the others, was now accomplished by the development and importance of international relations, as, being less numerous and far more extensive, the States had their centres more distant from each other. The political interests and sentiments of sympathy or dislike were so complicated and complex, that not a cannon shot could be fired in all Europe without all the Cabinets being interested in the result.

## LOUIS XIV.

A new Alexander must be able to wield the pen as well as the sword, and he could not push his enterprises very far. Louis XIV. himself had to submit to this manner of making war, although he certainly entertained the idea of upsetting the existing equilibrium, and he was sufficiently powerful at the end of the seventeenth century to trouble himself little about the general hostility. His military power was then beyond dispute the first, but as to its organisation it differed very little from that of the other States of Europe. Pillage and the devastation of the territory of the enemy,

which had played such a great part in the Wars of the Tartars, in those of the ancients, and even in the Middle Ages, was no longer popular.

This proceeding did less harm to the State than to the people ; it led to reprisals and did much harm to civilisation all round. Hence, generals came to regard the army more and more not only as the instrument, but also as the object of war.

With its fortresses and some positions prepared in advance the army constituted in each State a State apart, to the interior of which the element of war was consigned. All Europe rejoiced at this development of military systems, and regarded it as a proof of the superiority of its time and of the progress of humanity.

The horrible devastation and outrages of the Thirty Years' War sickened Europe, hence Grotius wrote his masterpiece, *De Jure Belli*, with the object of restraining military license and cruelty. But Louis XIV. himself, with all his elegance, when abandoning the Rhineland, ordered its devastation. The ruthless ruin of the Palatinate caused him to be put under the ban of Europe, 1688.

This notion was an error. The progress of humanity cannot produce contradictory or impossible results. Two and two are four, no amount of humanitarianism will make them six or even five. Nevertheless the error was for the benefit of the proprietors. It had very much influence in making war the exclusive business of the Government and in detaching the mass of the people from any interest in military affairs.

#### METHODICAL WARFARE.

At this epoch the plan of a war consisted for the most part in attacking a province by the offensive, and its defence by the adversary. The plan of each campaign was limited to the capture or defence of one or more fortresses.

Compare Marlborough's operations round Oudenarde and Lille, 1708.

Battles were not desired, and were only fought in connection with some of these plans. Any general who was led away, by the mere desire of winning, to begin a battle would have been regarded as very rash. The whole labours of a campaign were centred in some one siege, and rarely was a second undertaken ; when the

siege was over the army went into winter quarters and formed truces of neutrality or suspension of operations so complete that all fighting stopped on both sides, and neither belligerent dreamed of trying to take any advantage of the inactivity of the other side. When the forces were nearly equal, or when the invader turned out to be decidedly weaker than the invaded, there was neither siege nor battle, and all the efforts of the army were limited to the preservation of certain magazines and the maintenance of certain positions and the regular exhaustion of certain provinces.

As long as the war was everywhere conducted in this fashion and its energy was so limited and so obvious, this manner of procedure appeared natural and nobody complained; and the criticism of the military art, of which the beginnings date from the eighteenth century, was concerned with details and took no account of the commencement or of the end. Reputations of every kind arose. Thus Field Marshal Daun himself, though he had done more than any one else to spoil the plan of his sovereign, was hailed as a great general! Yet occasionally wise protests were heard to the effect that when no definite result followed on the possession of superior force, war was badly managed, no matter how much skill and prudence were otherwise displayed.

#### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

This was the general posture of affairs when the French Revolution burst out. Austria and Prussia, hoping to stop its torrential rush, made a vain display of their half military and half political methods, and while they were relying for the execution of their plans on the weak armies of the epoch, the year 1793 saw the sudden appearance of the most formidable military power conceivable—that of 30,000,000 people, of whom all the men regarded themselves as fellow-citizens in and took part in the war.

#### AN ARMED NATION.

We are not concerned with the causes of these momentous events, we are concerned with their consequences from the special point of view of the development of the Art of War.



All citizens became soldiers, hence war was no longer a matter for Cabinets and their hirelings, but the nation itself turned the balance of the military scales. Neither means nor objects were then limited or restrained within narrow spheres, and as the enemy had no counterpoise to the terrible energy and inexhaustible numbers with which he was opposed, his danger became extreme.

If these consequences were not at once apparent and were only under the Republic; if its generals had not pursued their end without rest or truce and had not overwhelmed all European monarchies; if occasionally the German Army had been able to resist with success and to stem the torrent, the cause can only be found in the technical imperfections which hampered soldiers, generals, and governments even under the Directory. But all this was altered and every detail made perfect under the brilliant direction of Buonaparte, and thenceforth the French Army, comprising in itself all the vital force of the nation, overran Europe with a vigorous impulse the results of which, as long as it was only opposed by the old methods of war, did not leave the issue of any contest doubtful for a moment.

#### PEOPLE'S WARS AGAINST FRANCE.

But in due time there was a reaction. In Spain there was a spontaneous outburst of national war. In 1809 Austria set an example of exceptional effort by forming not only reserves, but landwehr organisations suitable for the object in view and surpassing all previous efforts of that State. In 1812 Russia imitated Spain and Austria. The enormous size of that State enabled it to make full use of means which were too slowly provided and to increase the effect of the national movement, and the results were tremendous. In Germany Prussia called its people to arms, and though its population had been reduced one-half by the treaty of Tilsitt it was able to place in the field in 1813 twice as many men as in 1806. This energetic action was soon followed by all German States, and Austria at last reappeared on the scene, but with fewer men, in 1813. The whole force of the Allies that moved against France in 1813-1814 must have been about 1,000,000 men. Though the allied princes did not attain to



the perfect energy and rush of the French, yet no doubt there was a marked improvement in their methods. In eight months the theatre of war was transferred from the Oder to the Seine, and for the first time the proud Paris and the terrible Emperor were compelled to yield.

#### WAR'S TRUE FORM.

War which under Buonaparte and then over all Europe had become a national affair, came back to its original nature, and its operations were conducted with regard to its true conception. Its limits were determined only by the energy and enthusiasm of the Governments and the peoples. The vastness of the resources available, the greatness of the result at which they aimed, the enthusiasm of men's minds, gave extreme vigour to its action. The destruction of the enemy became the object of the struggle, and war once begun there were no attempts at treaties till after the enemy was rendered powerless. War was set free from conventional trammels by the intervention of the whole people. Therefore it assumed its true form, and was able to put forth all its strength. This was due to two causes: partly to interior changes brought about by the French revolution and partly to the dangers with which that Revolution threatened the nations. We cannot solve the question of the wars of the future. Will they be conducted with all the manhood and resources of the State, or will the Governments and the people once again separate their interests? There can, however, be little doubt that once some great national interests are at stake no State will be content to carry on war for long on the pre-Revolution lines, and the principle of hostility will recur on both sides, and so will the violent forms which were seen during the Napoleonic wars and the Wars of Liberation.

Here the masterly historical summary of Clausewitz closes; but we must refer to:—

#### WARS SINCE 1815.

From Waterloo, 1815, to 1861, there were no national wars properly so-called. The wars between Austrians and Italians and French very closely resembled in principle, and to some extent in the mode of recruiting armies, the eighteenth-century wars, and conscription as then in vogue was not a "nation in arms,"

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and the Crimean War was merely a side issue, and so far as France was concerned was largely dynastic. No doubt Prussia gave the lead again, and set about reviving the true theory and practice of national armies, with what was practically the whole manhood of the nation, and with an organised Brain of an Army Moltke attacked Austria in 1866 and crushed out its resistance in seven weeks. He carried the same principles and methods further still in 1870, and his armies were around Paris in seven weeks after crushing the regular French forces to bits.

In the Civil War in America, 1861 to 1865, the Confederates and Federals were practically nations in arms, and Grant adopted the strategy of wiping out the enemy's forces in the field by attrition. In 1877, in Turkey, the war was national, but very badly managed. The Japanese have adopted the methods of Napoleon and of Moltke.

### BRITISH POLICY AND WAR.

In England the army has been the sport of temporising and vote-catching politicians, the battledore and shuttlecock of base intriguers, and not one war has been conducted on any principle whatever. Our politicians have never once been properly prepared since 1815 for any military operations; the most scientific was in 1882 in Egypt. They have blundered into wars without plans or objects and drivelled through them with enormous loss in money, men, and prestige, and since 1870 neither in Asia nor in Africa have they secured any substantial, or profitable, or honourable results. They enlist soldiers by every device of cajolery and lying, and then betray and ruin them. They boast of patriotism and live on suffrance. As we wrote July, 1906, every soldier and sailor knows that the politicians are playing ducks and drakes with our national resources, and that in no one particular do they adopt the principles so clearly and wisely demonstrated by Clausewitz.

The author in his general remarks and historical summary has sought not only to indicate the general principles which have prevailed at different epochs, but also to show that, being subject at each epoch to different conditions, war has taken in each case a special form and peculiar character, and that there was in consequence for each epoch a special theory of war whatever may be the philosophic ideas on which everywhere sooner or later it must depend. In order to appreciate clearly the military events of each period and the skill of its generals we must always keep in view the principal relations and character of that period. Nevertheless, in all these different fashions in which it has been necessary to conduct war, by reason of the peculiar characteristics and military strength of that period, there are always general principles which cannot be ignored by any special theory. But as war has only

attained its full development and its complete scientific form in recent years, the general principles which were illustrated by the wars 1793-1815 are of most practical value and most applicable to unforeseen events.

Clausewitz himself makes a mistaken deduction. Naturally enough he concluded that he had lived through the heroic age and that the last words on the Art of War had been spoken by Napoleon and his marshals and Scharnhorst and Blücher and Gnesenau and Bulow and Winzingerode and Davidoff and Wellington and Barclay de Tolly and Bagration; hence he goes on to say—

In the future NO DOUBT WAR WILL NOT TAKE SUCH ENORMOUS PROPORTIONS, but it is probable that henceforth the vast scope which it has attained will not altogether end.

But surely the generation of soldiers that fought at the "battle of nations," Leipsic, had they been present at Gettysburg or Cold Harbour or Gravelotte or Sedan or Plevna or Mukden would admit that war had not become less grand and terrible in our age.

#### MORAL.

The wise theorist, then, will confine himself to teaching the rules for the most perfect form of war, and will consider and repudiate as faults all foreign influences which can divide attention from this scientific ideal. In order to rely on true ideas, it is necessary to consider all the numerous and varied relations from which war can arise, to expound its principal lines and always take into account the events which the particular epoch or moment may bring forth. To sum up: Although the end which is proposed and the means which are used depend practically on the situation in which the belligerents find themselves at the moment when the war breaks out, the object and the instruments of its attainment bear always the impress of the epoch and of its general characteristics, and always must submit to the modifications which the nature of the particular war may render expedient or inevitable.

I have not space to give very full details of the wars since the days of Clausewitz, but even he could not complain that their expense and loss of life were insignificant! I can only give the total expenditure on all sides in money and men.

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			Cost. £		Loss in men.	
1830-1840	...	France and Algeria	...	38,000,000	...	100,000
1854-1855	...	France, England and Russia	...	305,000,000	...	485,000
1859	...	France and Austria	...	45,000,000	...	63,000
1861-1865	...	American Civil War	...	1100,000,000	...	500,000
1866	...	Prussia and Austria	...	20,000,000	...	51,000
1870-1	...	France and Germany	...	500,000,000	...	290,000
1864-1870	...	Brazil and Paraguay	...	48,000,000	...	330,000
1877-8	...	Russia and Turkey	...	190,000,000	...	180,000
1904-5	...	Russia and Japan	...	200,000,000	...	490,000 *

Clausewitz frequently refers to the dogged obstinacy and ultimate success of the Russians in his time. If his spirit could have "revisited the glimpses of the moon," and hovered over the Manchurian battlefields, he would admit that the Muscovite was as steady a foe in 1904-5 as in 1806-7, or 1812 and 1813. This the *Times* correspondent admits: "Despite the fatal disadvantages under which diplomacy had engaged the Russian arms, and despite also the absence of all real enthusiasm on the part of the Tsar's subjects in the war, the grey-coated soldier from the distant steppes fought honourably and well. It is our belief that, the question of generalship aside, no army in the world would have done better against such an enemy as Japan, and assuredly no other would have taken defeat so stiffly, and have renewed the contest so stubbornly time after time." †

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\* Very uncertain.

† 'The War in the Far East,' by the military correspondent of the *Times*, page 610. The illuminating chapter, headed "Nunc Dimittis," in which the above-quoted passage occurs, cannot too often be read—over and over again.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE WASTE OF WAR.

MUCH discussion has recently taken place regarding the need for not only reserves to fill the first line when it starts for the front, but also of special reserves to fill the gaps made in the progress of the war, *e.g.* we had a small army, seldom 45,000 strong, in the Peninsula, and yet we lost 50,000 men dead in that campaign. The number of men absent from our ranks in India through illness and, in a number of cases, through preventable disease in a year, is often almost equal through readmissions to the whole force. Other armies have been equally or even more unfortunate, the Japanese apparently having succeeded in reducing the absentees from other causes than wounds to a minimum.

A long military march, interspersed with skirmishes and characterised by hard weather and harder bivouacs and hard and irregular fare, is a disastrous experience for all animals, and especially the paragon of animals, man.

I do not translate book 5, chaps. x. to xiv., on Marches, Cantonments and Subsistence, as the pith of these admirable treatises is embodied in modern text-books with more modern examples, and a much greater variety of material such as railways, and also of even worse roads than those in Clausewitz's time—for example, the roads traversed by Federal armies in America and by our troops in Asia. Of course steam carriage has simplified the subsistence problem; a railway doing ten times the work of wagons in the same time with less trouble and cost; and motor carriage is destined to simplify it still more. The details of cantonments were well illustrated during Werder's operations on the Lisaine and elsewhere during the German operations in France throughout the terribly severe winter of 1870-71.

## SUBSISTENCE.

Clausewitz's theory of subsistence is based on the methods of the Revolutionary Armies and of Napoleon and of the People's War which destroyed Napoleon, and is inapplicable to wars of modern times such as 1870-71 or 1904-5. All previous methods, when armies were mere enlisted machines worked by methodical methods, were displaced by the furious energy of the Revolutionary leaders, who threw conventionalities to the winds and only regarded success. "A new power of a new species," as Burke called it, came on the scene, and brought upon the theatre of operations a new kind of army. The French armies, 1793-96, were more like Tartar hordes than Marlborough's or Frederick's armies, and the whole of the old methods of war, including the art of subsistence, fell to bits. Magazines and lines of communications and bases were ignored, fortresses were passed with contempt, the soldiers of France were sent confidently across the border to "rush" methodical Austrian and Prussian and British generals. If a general showed any lack of energy, or lost a battle, he was promptly removed, and probably guillotined; universal service filled all gaps, and wholesale plunder replenished all empty wagons.

In the early days of Clausewitz's career an advancing army, as he says, paid no regard to any rights of property on the part of the invaded natives, and he calculated that in a fairly well-peopled country, *i.e.* of 2000 to 3000 souls to a square mile, an army of 150,000 combatants might be kept alive by the natives for two days at most within such a small area as would not interfere with concentration for battle, *e.g.* in Napoleon's marches from the Rhine to the Danube, 1805, he managed to live without any regular magazines or any elaborate organisation for supply. He also calculated that even the most densely populated places can furnish food for one day for as many troops as there are inhabitants. He also proves that forage for enormous numbers of horses can easily be procured by requisition in level agricultural countries. The British in the south of France, 1813-14, preferred to open a market and to purchase supplies, and hence were more abundantly provided than was Soult's army itself. On the other hand,



Marmont complained that his army could not operate at all on the Portuguese frontier, 1811-12, till spring and summer for lack of forage.

But when troops live on the country, and a halt for a few days takes place, great misery and ruin ensue unless elaborate precautions be taken beforehand : *e.g.* soldiers must carry spare rations, emergency provisions, wagoners must accompany the columns with absolute necessities for a few days. See for details of Napoleon's methods, Alison and Napier. A regular commissariat system must also be provided; in these respects Wellington's methods in the Peninsula were models at that period.

Nevertheless, several of the French generals in Spain—for example, Soult and Suchet—managed to live on the inhabitants in a very regular fashion, and to be equal to all emergencies; and Clausewitz belauds the efficiency of Napoleon himself, who brought great armies from the Adige to the Danube, and from the Rhine to the Vistula, with little provisions except what he got from the people, and without any distress from want. But in 1805, 1806, 1807, and 1809 the progress of the French Army was seldom checked by the long defence of obstacles or by reverses. However, in the winter of 1807, the failure of Eylau caused a most stupendous display of organisation and ability on Napoleon's part, so as to be ready for renewed effort in the spring.

However resolute the general, or however hardy the army, we must always remember that Napier said that no man can do much good work for long without, on the average, two pounds weight of food per day. Clausewitz prefers to say, "It is a well-proved principle that want and lack of regular food, however they may be risked or endured for a while, must be considered as at best temporary expedients, which should be followed as soon as possible by plenty or even superabundance."

The march of badly clad and half-starved thousands or myriads of men over every kind of road in every kind of alternative of weather, houseless for weeks, and with, as an only excitement, the rush and ruin of battle, is one of the saddest spectacles known to humanity. No wonder Wellington pointed out to the Portuguese Government, when it neglected to feed its troops, that "A starved



army is worse than no army ;" and that Napoleon said the art of war is only the art of subsisting. Rapidity of movement in war means enormous loss ; the sick, the straggling, the difficulty of supply even under the most favourable conditions are deplorable.

#### LOSSES IN RUSSIA, 1812.

Clausewitz gives some wonderful data. When Napoleon crossed the Niemen, on the 24th June, 1812, his army for the invasion of Russia amounted to 301,000 men. At Smolensko the 15th August, he detached 13,500, leaving, one would think, 287,000. But his army at that date numbered only 182,000, hence he must have lost from one cause or another 105,000 men, and there were only two engagements in that time with a loss in action of about 10,000 men, so that a third of the Grand Army must have fallen out in less than eight weeks, and in a march to his front of 350 miles. The distance from Strasburg to Paris is 250 miles, and after six engagements, including four great battles, the Germans went from the Rhine and invested Paris between the 1st August and the 19th September, 1870.

The march of Lord Roberts from the Modder River to Pretoria, and the whole strategy of Roberts, must be regarded as a permanent addition to the annals of military history. "In four weeks," says the German official account, "inclusive of a ten days' halt at Kronstadt, Lord Roberts' troops had covered 320 miles under great difficulties as regards supplies, in a country which was deficient in water, in roads, and in cultivation, and where the communications with the rear were in a most insecure condition. This was a performance which furnishes a striking and eloquent proof of the energy of the chief command, and of the devotion and endurance of the troops, which must ever remain remarkable in the history of war." To return to Napoleon : three weeks after Smolensko he was at Borodino, and had lost 144,000, and after eight days he had lost 198,000, more than half his whole army.

The losses started at  $\frac{1}{150}$  per day, then rose to  $\frac{1}{120}$  per day, and ultimately to  $\frac{1}{9}$  of the original force.

The march to Moscow lasted eighty-two days, the roads were not bad, the season was good, and there were two halts, one at

Wilna for fourteen days, and one at Witepsk for eleven days, and many stragglers closed up then. Alison has described the horrors of the French retreat from Moscow, and sets out that the pursuing Russians stood the hardships and the climate worse than the retreating French, and that the North Germans bore the hardships far worse than the Italians or southern French.

Clausewitz says that the Russians left Kaluga with 120,000 men and reached Wilna with 30,000 . . . the engagements were few and slight.

In the campaign of 1813 York's German corps of Blucher's command, between the 16th August and the 19th October, exclusive of casualties in battle, lost 16,000 out of 40,000 men.

Consequently, if we go to war without a lavish supply of reinforcements, we must be reduced to immobility or be ruined by mere depletion. Moreover, experience proves that men of the type who now enlist in our regular army, and whose physical state has been described in recent reports on the type of the unemployed, whom it was proposed to enlist by the thousand, would never get as far even in summer as from Grodno to Smolensko, let alone from Smolensko to Moscow. In a winter campaign, such as that of 1870-71, our present regular army and the special reserve would lose fifty-five per cent. in a march such as Frederick Charles made after Chanzuy from Orleans to Le Mans.

#### A SUMMARY OF VARIOUS CHAPTERS.

The mere word "Clausewitz" seems to have a fascination for some authors, but I confess that I find nothing that would justify me in adding to the bulk and expense of this treatise by translating or even making a *précis* of the chapters of our author on "Summary of Instruction for the Crown Prince, 1810-12;" they are very interesting, but of course in great part obvious or commonplace, and in other parts out of date. The "Guide to Tactics; or, the Theory of the Combat," is also very interesting, but if my readers must take up German treatises on these topics, I recommend Balck and Bernhardt, who are very excellent indeed. I omit chapters on the attack of fortresses, and the defence of a theatre of war. Modern fortresses are very different from those with which Clausewitz was familiar, and the use of field fortifications and improvised

fortifications has developed enormously—witness the lines of works in Virginia in 1862 to 1865, and in Georgia, 1864; the sudden appearance of the Plevna works on the Russian right flank 1877; the Boer entrenchments, and the entrenchments on both sides in 1904-5; in the latter case the fortified positions were as long as the distance between the extreme left wing of Napoleon on the Marne in 1814, and his extreme right on the Seine! and hence could scarcely have come within the range of our author's wildest imaginations; in fact, he dismisses most of the historic "lines" of the Bourbon wars in a few dozen paragraphs. He rightly considers that the object of cordons like the enormous China wall, which is equal in magnitude to all existing fortifications put together, or the "walls" of Hadrian and Antoninus, would be no use against Napoleonic armies, though they served their purpose to check Tartars, Mongols, Huns, and Goths, and indeed—if I may dare to mention them in such a connection—Picts and Scots themselves.

#### WOODS AND FORESTS.

The defence of Woods and Forests seems to me to be treated in too casual a fashion. They can give much more security than is supposed. The rash destruction of forests has had disastrous consequences from every point of view, and French writers now admit that from strategic, as well as social and climatic points of view, wholesale destruction of woods in the east of France has been a calamity. I wish our people could gather sense enough to cry "enough of party" for one year, and devote themselves to repairing the spoiled face of Nature. "Reafforest" should be an election cry. Evelyn's "*Sylva*," written in the time of Charles II., gave us oaken material for naval victories one hundred and fifty years later, and unless we soon plant again our posterity will pay heavy damages for our criminal negligence. But there is nothing about warfare in forests and woods in Clausewitz which cannot be found in any ordinary text-book, and suggestions and examples regarding mountain warfare can be better studied in Napier's various comments on the long series of mountain operations from the frontier of Portugal, and from Andalusia over the Pyrenees.

Clausewitz is so decidedly of opinion that, as Napier says, "Men and not mountains are the defence of nations," that he

regards a mountain frontier as a danger to a nation, and as leading to an altogether delusive sense of security. Not one state has been saved by a mountain range, not even "such as part Hispania's land from Gaul." I leave students of Napier and of Jomini and Alison to discuss some problems such as, "Would Spain be strong enough, from a military point of view, without the Pyrenees?" "Would Lombardy be more difficult to conquer without the Alps?" "Would a level country, such as the north of Germany, be more difficult to subdue than a hilly country?" "Would not a Spanish army defending Spain, and finding itself strong enough to fight the invader, do much better by taking up a good position south of the Ebro than by dividing itself in the passes of the Pyrenees?" I may say that Napier discusses a similar problem brilliantly in regard to the defence of Andalusia against Soult, 1810. But if my readers desire further theory and illustrations regarding mountain warfare, I refer them to former essays on the subject of "Mountain Warfare" in the pages of the UNITED SERVICE MAGAZINE, which Messrs. Clowes have published in book form.

#### FORTRESSES.

Some extraordinary doctrines have recently been laid down with regard to fortifications. Indeed, certain political novices, under the influence of the fantastic foolery of the Blue Water School on the one hand, and under the influence of the fantastic foolery of a reaction against "the fatally seductive influence of a fortress" on the other, proposed to make a clean sweep of our defences a couple of years ago! They remembered Metz, and they forgot Plevna; they remembered Sebastopol, and they forgot Richmond; they remembered the *ne plus ultra*, and they forgot the lines of Torres Vedras, and the Turkish and Italian Quadrilaterals. Or perhaps they knew nothing about any of these famous works, and repeated mere fallacies and parrot cries which were edited for them by sycophants and place hunters. Now Hamley lays down very clearly the value of fortresses in war, and the limitations to their value, and also their danger when unskilfully used. So does the Archduke Charles and General Pierron, and for that matter so did my late friend Colonel Henderson. I would not, therefore, refer

to Clausewitz on this point, only that German clothes are the only wear at present for our fantastic civilian Quixotes.

Our author, vol ii., book vi., 10 and 11, discusses fortresses from the defensive point of view—the only point of view in the minds of the creators of our inchoate Territorial Army. He says that fortifications are the most important *points d'appui* of the whole system of a country's defence. So, indeed, were Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, and the lines of Torres Vedras and San Sebastian and Pampeluna, not to mention many smaller places, and Soult's defensive lines from the Pyrenees to Bayonne, and at Toulouse.

The Turkish fortresses proved our author's case 1877-78. Clausewitz thus summarises the value of fortresses—

1. Fortresses protect the great magazines of supplies.

2. They protect rich towns and great centres of population.

Pierron objects that they ruin the industry of places, like Paris and Lyons, and he would not fortify capitals.

3. They may be considered as the locks of the barriers which the enemy meets in his advance.

4. They are excellent tactical *points d'appui*, e.g. Josephstadt and Koniggratz, 1866.

5. They are sheltered stations and positions.

6. They are shelters for beaten corps or for armies not yet fully organised or too feebly organised.

7. They are the shields of the defence.

8. They cover extended cantonments.

9. They protect provinces which are not occupied by the armies.

10. They are centres or rallying-points for insurgent populations.

11. They aid in a particularly effective fashion the defence of rivers and mountains: e.g. Polish, Italian, and Turkish Quadrilaterals, and the Rhine and Moselle and Meuse fortresses, Magdeburg, Dresden, Bitsche, Phalzburg, Belfort, and the fortresses of Afghanistan.

Another virtue of fortresses which Clausewitz points out, is that if situated so as to command a river, they interrupt the whole navigation of that river. Hence the desperate efforts made by the Federals, 1862-63, to get possession of the Confederate fortress Vicksburg, and President Lincoln's joy when by its capture the Mississippi ran unvexed to the sea.

I have always found that Marquiss Feuquières is a most judicious

author, and he always supports his views by personal reminiscences of the great generals of his own period of service, 1672-1710. I quote from his chapter on "Lines."

"To close my reflections on lines formed with a view to cover a country from inroads, and contributions, or even for the inclosure of an army, I may venture to affirm that they can only be thought important by a general of a moderate genius, who is incapable of continuing in a good post near an enemy, without being compelled to an engagement against his inclinations, and who always thinks himself in danger unless ramparts of earth interpose between him and his enemy.

"The Prince of Condé, and Marshal Turenne, who were the greatest generals of the last century, never entertained a thought of conducting a war in this manner, though they were persons of excellent abilities, and superior in genius to all the commanders in their time. These great men have frequently supported themselves, through the course of campaigns, in a situation near armies much more numerous than their own; and without throwing up lines, have rendered them incapable of penetrating into our territories, from no other cause than a judicious choice of good posts. The Marshal de Crequi, who, as I have formerly observed, sustained very arduous campaigns against the Duke of Lorraine, was entirely unacquainted with the use of lines. In a word, M. de Luxembourg, who so gloriously pursued the plans of those great men, in the command of armies, and in contradiction to that opinion by which the use of lines had been established in France, was always so fully persuaded that they were pernicious to a general entrusted with the conduct of a war, that no consideration could ever prevail upon him to encamp his army within a circumference of lines.

"I conclude, therefore, from all these great examples, that lines formed to cover a country can never be conducive of that effect, but when they have a contracted front, and are not surroundable by the enemy; and when the troops that guard them cannot be forced in flank, into a greater extent than will be necessary to comprehend them in order of battle; and I likewise add, that it is always very dangerous for a general to enclose his army within lines on any occasion whatever."



## CHAPTER XVII.

### POLITICS, POLICY AND WAR.

EXAMPLES of the extraordinary effect of military reverses on political institutions are supplied better by France than by any other modern state. For example, the defeats of Woerth and Spicheren (August 6th, 1870), and the retirement of armies which it was supposed were about to invade Germany, produced the utmost chagrin and excitement in Paris. The Emperor and Commander-in-Chief, Napoleon III., was violently attacked, and so was Leboeuf, his Chief of the Staff, and Bazaine was indicated as a possible saviour of his country. Herein the politicians made another mistake. The Minister Ollivier, who had engaged in war with a "light heart" and in such an unpardonable fashion, was forced to resign (August 9th) and was replaced by Palikao, who within three weeks gave orders which, notwithstanding Macmahon's protest, brought about the disaster of Sedan. The order to relieve Bazaine was issued by this chief and the Empress, in spite of the fact that the Council of War at Chalons and General Trochu urged a retirement towards Paris betimes, and that the War Office was absolutely ignorant of the facts of the case at the front. When the news of the disaster of Sedan reached Paris, revolution broke out at once. Napoleon was deposed, the Empress Regent had to fly for her life, and the Parisian Deputies nominated a Government of National Defence, an institution which will probably be established, instead of a Party Cabinet, once England experiences another series of disasters such as inaugurated the late Boer War.

It is strange, on the other hand, how a really high-toned political chief can maintain his position and retain popular support in spite of the failures of his departments and generals. Thus Lincoln was the MAN politically for years of disaster (1861-1865) in America and was re-elected at the close of the War. No doubt the military successes of Cromwell explained in great part his absolute political position and the ease with which he ejected Parliament after Parliament; and a large proportion of the Roman Emperors owed their political elevation to their prowess and to the confidence, if not of the Prætorian Guards of some triumphant legion from the provinces.

### ALLIANCES.

It is one of the traditions of Europe that States make engagements with other States by defensive and offensive treaties to lend



mutual support in case of war without thereby ignoring their separate interests and friendships or enmities from other points of view. They limit themselves to promising reciprocally an efficient and settled number of troops, generally very restricted in numbers and without any regard to the subject of the particular war or to any more general reflections than the might and resources of the adversary. They do not even consider themselves as engaged in War before a formal declaration,

(now no longer necessary, a condition of war will do),

and the engagement is only supposed not to end before peace is secured. The exact nature of this latter part of the obligation has never been determined, and usage has varied.

It would be much simpler if the ally simply engaged to supply 20,000 or 30,000 men or more in such a fashion as to place them entirely at the disposal of the other party, to be used altogether for his purposes; this would be very simple, as the allied force would be part and parcel practically of his own force.

But this is rarely the case, and as a rule the auxiliary forces preserve an independent command, and their operations depend on their own Court and do not go further than the limits which it imposes. The parties do not enter into alliances because each fears that if it does it will be annihilated or seriously injured by the common enemy. Often the alliance is a kind of commercial enterprise. Each having calculated what it can hope to gain or fear to lose brings to the common fund a capital of 30,000 or 50,000 men, and works as if it could not risk more on the speculation.

This was practically what was meant by Wars of Alliances, till the extreme danger to which the unlimited power and vast resources of Napoleon exposed Europe brought back the alliance policy of States to the natural condition when half measures would be of no use and mere anomalies. The Allies soon found that peace or war is not a varying or indetermined but an absolute notion which does not admit of gradation. Such conditional alliances could not crush Napoleon.

The policy of a Blucher and not of a Schwartzenburg was required. It might suit dynastic wars, it would not avail in Wars of Peoples. But it was

the system of alliances which prevailed whenever the object of the war was merely to threaten an adversary and to be an instrument in the hands of negotiators and diplomatists.

The political idea which dominates a war also exercises no small influence on its strategy. When the sacrifice which is demanded from the adversary is of comparatively small importance, it is sufficient to seize an object of similar importance to him, and the seizure of such an object may be expected without any very exhaustive efforts. The adversary estimates the force of the attack and of his defence almost in a similar fashion.

If either side makes a mistake in its calculation and has to tackle a harder task than was expected and finds that owing to lack of money or men or generalship or moral energy it cannot hope to retrieve its blunders, then it must get out of the War as best it can, and under the pretence of renewing its efforts under more favourable circumstances, it lets the War drivel out of existence like a hopeless invalid.

But manifestly all this kind of warfare is not of the style of any of the celebrated international struggles, or of Masters like Cæsar, Charlemagne Zenghis, Tamerlane, Napoleon, Grant, Lee, Moltke and Oyama.

#### WAR IS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLICY.

Our Author, in Vol. III. Chapter VI. *a*, sets himself the task of discussing how various social and political interests, although by their nature antagonistic to War, nevertheless come into close contact with War, and how the contradictory elements of Policy and War, after being neutralised one by the other nevertheless ultimately interjoin, and indeed so amalgamate as to form a unity in practical life.

Everybody knows that War is one of the consequences of the political relations between governments and nations, but it is generally supposed that these relations cease by the mere fact of War, and that it establishes a particular state of political relations specially regulated by special laws. Clausewitz contends that WAR IS ONLY THE CONTINUATION OF POLITICAL METHODS WITH AN INTERMIXTURE FOR A PERIOD OF OTHER THAN THE ORDINARY METHODS AND MEANS.

By the INTERMIXTURE OF OTHER MEANS WE WISH TO SET FORTH THAT FAR FROM CEASING OR TRANSFORMING ITSELF BY

WAR, POLITICAL INTERCOURSE, whatever may be otherwise the means employed, persists in all essentials and determines, from beginning to end of the military operations, the general lines along which the events of the War follow each other and to which they are linked.

It is clear, therefore, that War ought never to be separated from political intercourse, and that when this state of things occurs it brings about the breaking up of all international relations, which leads to an unreasonable and aimless struggle.

This would be the nature of a War if it could be conceived and executed in the most complete extreme of its conception, as the display of savage hatred between the opposed communities.

But in point of fact Modern War never even approached such a condition of fight *à outrance*, like a war of religion or of white men against African natives or Red Indians.

How our own warlike policy has been hampered, nullified and ruined, not by considerations of high policy, which relate to the future greatness of our race, but by the basest arts of party or faction, is a commonplace of our history before war, during war, and during negotiations for peace. An example of the former is the fashion in which the party in power (1899) admittedly was obliged to permit its preparation for War, and hence the lives of our men, to be affected by regard to the possible manœuvres of the Opposition in the House of Commons; by the intrigues against Marlborough (1710); and by those against Wellington (1811-12); and by the disgraceful and humiliating conditions of peace after prolonged and successful campaigns (1713 and 1763).

But, after all, War itself is only a part of Policy. When its operations begin politicians should support the generals, but should not interfere with their strategy and tactics; but it must not be forgotten that War does not in any part of its course supersede Policy. It is only a phase in the general life of the nations engaged. All through we must recognise that political aims and principles, relations with other foreign States, as well as the belligerent States, and the greater or less range, more or less pretentious and exacting views of the belligerents, exercise a very decisive influence on the conduct and indeed strategy of the War itself.

For example, we shall never see any State developing as much energy in supporting the cause of another State as its own cause. An army is sent to support an ally, but if the common action is not successful the obligation is supposed to be over, and each seeks to get out of the business as well as possible.

If one is offered terms it makes little fuss about deserting the ally.

The Dutch and Catalans were deceived by the English (1713); so was Frederick (1762); and the United States quietly made terms for themselves with the English after their victory at York Town (1781); and left the French and Spanish in the lurch to endure some heavy knocks before the war ceased in 1783.

The following paragraphs should be carefully weighed by the superficial charlatans and philosophical humanitarians who put their trust in *ententes cordiales*, and hence would have us neglect our own military strength and trust to our neighbours.

War has never been anything more than an exceedingly energetic way of expressing the views of a politician in a language which, if it has little logic, certainly has a very complete grammar of its own.

War separated from policy would simply be a display of savage hatred between nations, and revert to its original and true character.

All the relations between the opposed powers involved in War must be considered by the strategist as well as by the politician. They cannot be separated.

Hence War, though contradictory to ordinary political intercourse and an action incomplete by itself, is always the servant of Policy and its instrument.

As being always the servant of Policy, War necessarily assumes some of its characteristics. The stronger and more decided the policy the more energetic the War.

There is not any limit which can be placed to such action, and indeed, under a very powerful Policy, War may revert to its absolute and original form. Indeed, the absolute form and its consequences must always be borne in mind by the politicians. A war for some local or secondary object may develop into an affair of National life or death. Thus only can War regain its unity from a logical and rational point of view, and one can consider its great designs from a reasonable standpoint. The consequence of all this is that Policy does not enter deeply into details of War, it does not select posts and arrange patrols, but it often exercises the most decisive influence on the choice of positions and arrangements for battle, and certainly on the elaboration of the plans of campaigns. A correct point of view is necessary for a student of the phases of War; indeed, a fair prospect and commanding point of view are

necessary for the appreciation properly of any phases of human life and management.

#### POLICY MUST PREDOMINATE.

If we were to consider War at one time from the point of view of the commander, at another from that of the administration, and at another from that of the politician, we would be inclined to ask if it is necessary that Policy or Politics should dominate everything else?

But we must admit that Policy reunites in itself and conciliates all the reasonable interests of the State and of each of all its citizens. To it is confided the care of all these interests abroad. We have not to inquire if, following on false direction, it serves only the interests of individuals and is the instrument of the base ambition of parties and cliques and the tools of vanity. Because in no case is the Art of War an Art of Instruction in the objects and methods of Policy. We must conceive POLICY AS REPRESENTING rightly or wrongly, fairly or unfairly, THE INTERESTS OF ALL THE STATE.

This point of view simplifies the matter, and we have only to decide if in the elaboration or execution of plans of war, the political point of view is to take the lead of the exclusively military point of view or if, giving place to the latter, it ought to be completely subordinated or disappear. But in order that all political action should cease when hostilities commence, it would be necessary that wars should be the expression of a principle of excessive hostility (such as George III. and Blucher felt for Napoleon)

and that the struggle becomes a question of life and death.

But as in reality wars are for the most part only manifestations of Policy itself, it would be absurd to subordinate the political point of view to the merely military.

*E.g.* Strasburg bombardment ceased because it was hoped that the city would again become German. The end of war is not annihilation, but peace. Napoleon III. was a politician all through the Italian campaign (1859); Louis XIV. and Napoleon and Roman Emperors and Peter the Great could say *L'état c'est moi*.

In fact Policy is the intelligence which engenders War, and

War is only an instrument in its hands. Therefore the military point of view must be subordinated to the political. Thus considered from the highest point of view the Art of War transforms itself into Policy, but into Policy which, instead of inditing diplomatic epistles, delivers battles.

The rulers of the State must accept responsibility with the generals for the general directions, lines and objective of the strategic operations. No general can take any important decision in war without having regard to its political consequences, and it is a mistake to ascribe failure to political influence or the Policy itself, because as long as Policy remains WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE, it cannot do other than exercise a good influence.

One might just as well ascribe the awful costs and waste and failures under our Jurisprudence to Law. . . . If the Law was what it should be such direful consequences could not result from the political and social action of lawyers.

Even as a half-taught linguist gives orders which insure disappointment, so inadequate Policy may order enterprises which cannot be executed and for which it has not prepared.

As was the case with us in 1854 and 1899.

Mere military ability will not make a good Minister of War; any more than mere legal lore or *nisi prius* smartness will make a good judge. A man of genius can be a good War Minister even if he is not very well versed in any branches of the Military Art.

Wide range of political view, aptness of comprehension, knowledge of character, general knowledge and strength of will, make the able ruler in every branch of administration—but mere lawyers, mere technical men and, above all, mere vote-catchers, are of all Ministers of State, whether in time of Peace or of War, by far the worst.

As for Military or any other technical skill, the wise ruler can be supplied with as much as he pleases. France was never worse led in any point of view than under the brothers Belle-Isle and the Duke of Choiseul, who were nevertheless good soldiers.

In order that War should carry out the designs of Policy in its entirety, and that in turn Policy should be able to utilise all the resources which War puts at its disposal, when the statesman and the soldier are not one and the same person, the best method is to make THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF A MEMBER OF THE CABINET, so that he can take part in all the great resolutions in Policy.



Surely he has as much right to be there as some political lawyer M.P. suddenly transformed by political arts into a Lord Chancellor.

N.B. A Committee of Imperial Defence that can decide nothing, is not a Cabinet, and an Army Council, which is the most preposterous of all anonymous Star Chambers, is not a Commander-in-Chief.

In the case of the great movement in 1813, 1814, 1815 the allied sovereigns and ministers of state accompanied the armies in the field

(as there was no electric telegraph, and rapid decisions, political and military, were necessary).

All military conceptions influenced by any other military leader except the Commander-in-Chief in the Cabinet are extremely dangerous, and it is rare that they are not prejudicial to the proper conduct of the War. It is therefore necessary to reject the example of France in 1793, 1794, 1795, when from Paris Carnot directed the marches of armies.

Terror is an instrument which only revolutionary governments can employ. It was not altogether to the new strategy of the French or to the old strategy of the Allies that the early successes of the French Revolution were due. It was rather because the allied Governments failed altogether to comprehend the nature of the new political forces let loose in France by the Revolution.

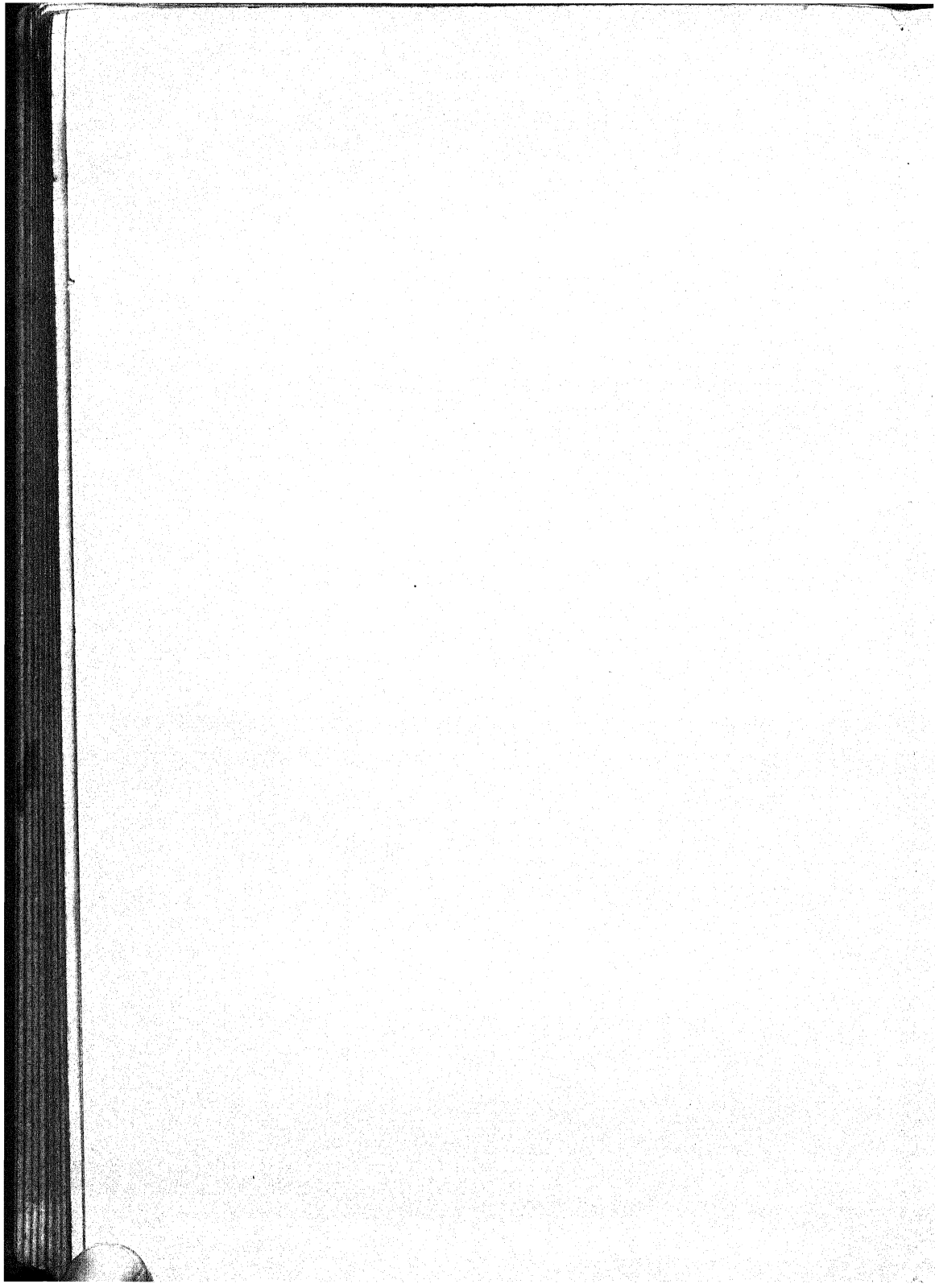
Burke understood them and preached against them with rare foresight and energy; his policy, if adopted betimes, would have been followed by military success. But the allied politicians, like our own party wire-pullers, could not see beyond their noses; Napoleon was only the child of the Revolution and fell when the peoples turned his own weapons against him. He was always able to deal easily with the old routine Diplomats as well as Society Generals and Army Councils like the Austrian Aulic Council.

We can say, then, that it is in great part due to the DEFECTIVE Policy of their adversaries that the French owed the twenty-five years of victory that followed on the Revolution.

In sum. . . War is an instrument of Policy; it takes its character and its dimensions from Policy, in its principal features and lines it is Policy itself, and Policy, although it has changed its pen for the sword, nevertheless continues to follow and always obeys its own laws.

We have now brought our labours on Clausewitz to a close for the present. When we began them, no translation of the great German's masterpiece was

available. Colonel Graham's translation published by Messrs Trübner and Co. (1873) was out of print. Messrs. Clowes acquired the right of translating the new German edition, and we have given excerpts of the most striking passages and chapters of the original. But we are glad to know that Colonel Graham's translation has been re-edited by Colonel Maude, and that a new edition is now available. In spite of its terrible dryness and its difficulty, even to Germans, this work on War is a masterpiece. But no doubt, alone and without any attempt at explanation or paraphrase or illustration it is more difficult than Bacon's 'Novum Organum' or Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding' or Schopenhauer's 'Essays on Love.' We therefore hold that the Editor of the UNITED SERVICE MAGAZINE has done good service in affording us space for what very probably most of his readers will believe to be quite enough for all practical purposes of the views of Clausewitz on War and of our views and commentaries on Clausewitz.



## A MORAL.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the great Roman Emperor, defeated Parthians and Quadi, and after winning a great victory over the Germans, 179 A.D., died the next year at either Sirmium (Mitrovitz) on the Save, or at Vindobona (Vienna) on the Danube. Reflecting on all the great strategic and social movements and ebbs and flows of humanity, what Bacon calls the "Vicissitudes of Things," so many of which Clausewitz had witnessed, this philosophic warrior, who ruled absoutely from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, and from the snows of Scotland to the burning desert of the Sahara, wrote—

"48. This is a fine saying of Plato: That he who is discoursing about men should look also at earthly things as if he viewed them from some higher place; should look at them in their assemblies, armies, agricultural labours, marriages, treaties, births, deaths, noise of the courts of justicc, desert places, various nations of barbarians, feasts, lamentations, markets, a mixture of all things, and an orderly combination of contraries.

"49. Consider the past and such great changes of political supremacies! Thou mayest also foresee the things that will be. For they will certainly be of like form, and it is not possible that they should deviate from the order of things that take place now."

We have lived to see the experiences of Clausewitz in the reign of George III. repeated, not only in Europe, but also in America, Africa, and Asia.

THE END.



# EXPLANATION OF BOUNDARIES.

Extent of France in 1789 and in 1848  
shown thus  
Extent of France in 1812  
shown thus

Political divisions of 1812 named  
in light letters.  
Modern divisions before 1866 are  
marked by dotted lines & named  
in strong letters



**MAP OF EUROPE**  
SHOWING THE EXTENT OF FRANCE BEFORE  
THE REVOLUTION OF 1789,  
and at the height of  
NAPOLEON'S POWER IN 1812.

SCALES  
Geographical Miles 60 to a Degree  
English Miles 69 to a Degree  
NOTE: The places underlined are Battlefields.  
First Class Fortresses marked thus \*

**NAPOL BATT**

1800  
Formation of  
Confederal  
Rhine, Jul  
Jena and  
October 14  
Entrance in  
Battles of  
and Goly  
ber 26.

1801  
Tyllan, Febru  
Heilsberg, J  
Friedland, Ju

1808-11  
Peninsula Wa  
Map of the P

1809  
Ahensberg, A  
Landslut, Apr  
Echmuhl, Apr  
Entrance into  
Aspern, May 1  
Raab, June 14  
Wagram, July

1812  
Borodino, Sept  
Burning of M  
September 1  
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1813.  
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Katzbach, Aug  
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1814.  
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Montereau, F  
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leon, April

1815  
Ligny and  
Bras, June  
Wavre and V  
June 18.  
Napoleon su  
to Captain I  
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July 4.



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Author

Clausewitz, Gen. C.V.

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